

**BRINGING UP "BABY":
THE BIRTH AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF *SEVENTEEN* MAGAZINE**

by

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However, again as with Helen and *Seventeen*, it took a village to raise this baby, and I am grateful and indebted to the people who assisted in this process.

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ABSTRACT

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Bringing Up “Baby”: The Birth and Early Development Of *Seventeen* Magazine

The 1940’s saw the development of two important components of contemporary popular culture: the teenager as a socially-constructed subjectivity and the teen magazine. This project uses an extended case study design to analyze how the two developed in tandem through the microcosm of the first teen magazine, *Seventeen*. Drawing on archival materials, historical sources, oral histories, interviews, and the magazine issues, I examine *Seventeen* as a text, a business, a workplace, and the product of cultural agents from its birth in September 1944 through its sixth birthday in September 1950, paying special attention to two periods in its history: September 1944 to September 1945, representing the World War II period, and September 1949 to September 1950, representing the postwar period.

Seventeen was the conceptual inspiration of founding editor-in-chief, Helen Valentine. Valentine, who called the magazine her “baby,” envisioned a service and fashion magazine for high school girls, an idea that she sold to publisher Walter Annenberg. As the first teen magazine, *Seventeen* constructed the teen girl ideal in three venues: its editorial pages, promotional materials, and advertisements. Originally, *Seventeen*’s editorial staff balanced fashion fare with advice on citizenship and careerism. Concurrently, however, *Seventeen* marketed teen girls as

consumers to business, often through their prototype, “Teena.” Advertisers responded in turn, selling not just products but a consumer role and feminine ideal to the readership.

Seventeen’s content and its representation of the teen girl ideal shifted rather dramatically between its birth and fifth birthday. Over time, consumer-friendly content increased, while citizenship-focused content declined as *Seventeen’s* discourse moved away from Valentine’s progressive model of service and citizenship and toward the more traditional model of fashion, romance and homemaking. I explain these changes by examining the social forces that exerted pressure on Valentine and *Seventeen* from the beginning, including the changing cultural milieu, the economic structure of the magazine industry; reader preferences; and power relations at the magazine. By *Seventeen’s* sixth birthday, Valentine was no longer editor-in-chief, and the magazine and its teen girl ideal were moving away from their wartime service roots and into a new domesticated consumer future.

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CHAPTER 1

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: The Reflection and Reproduction of the Feminine Ideal in Popular Culture

Contemporary western society is surrounded by media, immersed in media, dependent on media, influenced by media ... we have become, quite literally, a media culture.¹ Media are so ubiquitous to our environment, however, that they sometimes become “like the air we breathe, ever present yet rarely considered.”² Thus, many of us routinely go through the motions of daily life, reading newspapers, perusing magazines, watching television, playing video games, surfing the internet, listening to music – often without much conscious or critical consideration of our own media consumption. Media scholar Susan Douglas warns that to ignore media in this way allows them to continue “doing what they do best: promoting a white upper-middle-class, male view of the world that urges the rest of us to sit passively on our sofas and fantasize about consumer goods[...].”³

As our modern cultural storytellers, the mass media join other influential social institutions, such as the family, the educational system, and organized religion, in teaching us about the world in which we live.⁴ And as Douglas enjoins, tales they do tell – tales infused with lessons on gender, race, sexuality, and social class. Tales that reveal (and revel in) the ideals and values of western society. Tales that are underlaid with lessons on how to improve our own individual status in society.⁵ Across a multitude of media formats, the texts and discourses of mainstream popular culture meld into a strikingly congruent worldview. Representations of individual

flawlessness and utopian lifestyles dominate the cultural landscape of the mediated world, creating standards by which “regular folk” measure their success in society,⁶ and encouraging the pursuit of perfection through the acquisition of material goods.⁷

In part because of their omnipresence, media texts have become a primary site for the construction of identity in contemporary Western society.⁸ While some scholars highlight each person’s agency in choosing which messages or representations to embrace for themselves,⁹ other scholars (myself included) vehemently argue in response that one’s choices, as presented by the media, are extremely limited and limiting.¹⁰ Feminists, in particular, have been concerned about the gendered strictures of media representations, especially as they relate to women’s lives. Noting that gender inequality is often accomplished and sustained through our everyday practices, they point to media consumption as among our most common daily customs.¹¹ Over time, their investigations and analyses of a wide variety of electronic and print media texts have uncovered a pervasive pattern of stereotyping that upholds and naturalizes multiple inequalities, including gender.¹²

Women have a unique burden in their relationship to a popular culture that has at its root the glorification and hypervaluation of female beauty. Although some variation of “ideal” feminine beauty has existed throughout history in representations in art and science,¹³ media have become the primary purveyor of our contemporary feminine beauty ideal.¹⁴ One of the central gendered narratives circulated by media is the “beauty myth,” described by Naomi Wolf as the false

assertion that “[t]he quality called ‘beauty’ objectively and universally exists. Women must want to embody it and men must want to possess women who embody it.”¹⁵ Wolf describes the beauty myth as a hierarchical “currency system” in which individual women compete for ascendancy based on a “culturally imposed physical standard.”¹⁶

The representation of that physical standard, which I refer to as the feminine beauty ideal, is generally unnatural, achievable only through substantial effort. Thus, reflecting the foundational and symbiotic relationship of patriarchy and capitalism undergirding the beauty myth, the female beauty ideal finds its soulmate and counterpart in consumption. At least in the stories of popular culture, beauty is a commodity that can be bought and paid for at the store.¹⁷ To this end, media and advertisers barrage women with messages about the transformative possibilities of buying and using certain products.¹⁸

Not coincidentally, the activity of consumption has also become increasingly gendered.¹⁹ Certainly, if actions speak louder than words, there is ample indication that women have been extremely responsive to the clarion call of consumption, selecting “shopper” as part of their identity repertoire. According to historian Lizbeth Cohen, this trend began at the end of World War II, when the concept of the “good citizen” dichotomized by gender into men as producers and women as consumers.²⁰ Today, educated women spend more time shopping than any other segment of society.²¹ In addition, age is also becoming a significant factor in consumption, as media, manufacturers, and advertisers target the attention and the

disposable incomes of tweens and teens.²² Not coincidentally, although these age-related terms appear gender-neutral, that is rarely the case. When used in reference to shopping or to the teen magazines that promote it, they almost always refer to girls and young women.²³ (Have you ever heard a boy referred to as a “tween”?).

Over time, the cultural mandates of feminine beauty and consumption have become inextricably intertwined and conflated, with the ideal woman represented as a beautiful consumer.²⁴ Media present this as a process, wherein women pursue the beauty ideal through the disciplining of their bodies, which inevitably requires them to purchase products or services.

SELLING AND BUYING THE FEMININE BEAUTY IDEAL: YOUNG, THIN, (UN)DRESSED, GROOMED – AND WHITE

The cultural construct of the feminine beauty ideal is multifaceted and, as maturing women know only too acutely, one of its most integral components is youth, with aging its antithesis – the anti-ideal.²⁵ Contemporary media culture celebrates and worships youth, its images and rhetoric revealing, sometimes literally, the superiority of youthful beauty and sexuality.²⁶ Conversely, films, television, and magazines symbolically annihilate the mature bodies of older women, through their conscious omission.²⁷ Aging, however, is a disparate process for men and women, in both real life and in media representations. For males, whose value is measured by power and wealth, maturity may actually increase their social worth.²⁸ For women, however, aging strikes unmercifully at the locus of their value, for the more a woman's body ages, the farther it gets away from its cultural ideal – and the more it is

unable to achieve or properly display the related ideals of (youthful) sexuality, beauty, and physical health and fitness.

Sometimes quite ironically, as in the case of anorexics and bulimics, women's "physical health and fitness" now translates to thinness. Thin is *the* body ideal for western women²⁹ and the standard has become thinner over time.³⁰ Due to the extreme nature of the current thin body ideal, achievement often necessitates reliance on the disciplinary practices of exercise, dieting and disordered eating. These strategies have become so normative that even the latter tactic has received a degree of cultural acceptance.³¹

For those less-than-ideal bodies lacking the will to exercise, starve, and/or regurgitate, the medical establishment peddle the most drastic form of bodily discipline – plastic surgery. Plastic and/or cosmetic surgery is the fastest growing segment of the "body industry,"³² constituting a multi-million dollar per year industry, and serving millions of people a year.³³ For instance, in 2004, plastic surgeons performed 11.9 cosmetic procedures, which represented a 465% increase from 1997.³⁴ Cosmetic surgeons market their services to women as a positive and empowering experience – a way of physically "operationalizing" an individual woman's control over her own body.³⁵ This marketing strategy has been effective, with women making up about 90% of all cosmetic surgery recipients.³⁶ In fact, cosmetic surgery is becoming so prevalent among women, it may soon be normalized to the extent that *not* getting cosmetic surgery will be considered deviant and those who refuse to submit subject to stigma.³⁷

Another driving force in the production and reproduction of the feminine body ideal is the women's fashion industry, which is embedded in the related industries of retail, advertising, entertainment, and media.³⁸ Illustrations of the relationship between fashion and body ideal abound, reflecting the dialectical relationship between clothing styles and ideal body types.³⁹ Today, women's fashions function less as body-cover than as body-uncover – mere accouterment for displaying the (almost naked) body.⁴⁰ Youthful clothes reveal flesh, drawing the eyes of others to thin thighs, tight abs, and pierced navels. Thong panties and string bikinis introduce the once private to the public.⁴¹ In this way, contemporary women's clothes “out” a body more than the clothes of yesteryear – literally exposing a real female body's relation to the ideal, for all the world to see.⁴² Thus, the body ideal, as mandated by fashion, has become a more rigid template for modern women (young and old) than it was for their mothers and grandmothers in earlier periods.

Grooming is a daily discipline that many women engage in to write their femininity on their bodies, using purchased brushes, pencils, wands and assorted and sundry tools of the trade. To fastidiously groom, a woman must literally partition her body, keeping each individual section perfectly trained, tidied, and toned⁴³ – a process so time-consuming that upkeep becomes an ongoing, never-ending “body project.”⁴⁴ Skin must be kept soft and smooth, with all leg, underarm, facial and pubic hair bleached or removed.⁴⁵ Head hair, on the other hand, a vital necessity, must be conditioned, gelled, moussed, dyed, streaked, permed, curled, cut, straightened, coiffed and/or adorned.⁴⁶ The face framed by hair is not satisfactory

“as is”⁴⁷; in order to be presentable, one has to “put one’s face on,” through the application of makeup – including foundation, blusher, eye shadow, eye liner, and mascara. Of course, this necessitates having to take one’s face off at nighttime – which leads to the application of cleansers, astringents, eye creams, and face lotions.

Older women must camouflage or eliminate all embodied signs of maturity. Spider and varicose veins, which graphically illustrate the aging process, serve as jarring violations that must be erased with saline injections or stripping procedures. Gray hair is dyed, age spots are bleached, and wrinkles are erased with the assistance of medical serums such as alpha hydroxies, retinol, and this week’s miracle “age-defying” salves.

Women of color are offered particularly transformative beauty products and procedures. Cosmetic companies market hair straighteners and fade creams to African American women to help tame and lighten their ethnic physical features.⁴⁸ Asian women, on the other hand, line up to avail themselves of a type of eyelid surgery that creates wider eyes that more closely approximate the Euro-ideal.⁴⁹ These “corrective” cosmetics and procedures illuminate an underlying, implicit facet of the beauty ideal: it is based on the Western European white body.⁵⁰

Viewed through the beauty myth’s refractive prism, women’s value, to both individual men and society in general, lies solely in their bodies, not their minds. Certainly, such a narrow definition of ideal womanhood doesn’t offer girls and women a diversity of materials to use in constructing their identities. Worse yet, the internalization of this ideal may actually make girls and women complicit in their

own subordination, ultimately perpetuating a system that oppresses and devalues them.⁵¹ Feminist philosophers Susan Bordo and Sandra Bartky argue that as women learn to see their bodies as objects of a male gaze, their patriarchal subordination becomes increasingly embodied.⁵² Applying a Foucauldian lens to the association between women's media consumption and the internalization of the beauty mandate, they posit that embracing and pursuing the feminine body ideal results in women's self-discipline of their own bodies. In this way, reminiscent of Foucault's description of the Panopticon, women beautifiers become both prisoners and guards in their own bodily surveillance and discipline.⁵³

A critique of the beauty myth risks inadvertently portraying the women who pursue it as "cultural dopes," mindlessly following the directives of the beauty, fashion, retail and media industries. But, as Bordo thoughtfully reminds, this couldn't be farther from the truth. Instead, women beautifiers are often high achievers who, upon identifying the cultural bar, labor intensively to measure up.⁵⁴ They do this rationally, recognizing that society rewards beautiful women with overwhelming generalized approval and economic remuneration in all venues, including the workplace.⁵⁵

However, at its best, the pursuit of beauty offers some individual women the opportunity to achieve short term success. To compete within its constraints is to ultimately become ensnared in a never-ending cycle of assessment (against an un-achievable ideal), body dissatisfaction, and material consumption.⁵⁶ In addition, it privileges already privileged women (i.e., white and wealthy), who have the

resources to engage in the pursuit,⁵⁷ leaving less privileged women (minority and those of modest means) with the dilemma of debt or perceived deficiency. And even for those with the economic resources to pursue the ideal, there is another cost. The cost of time – perhaps time better spent on more socially important or individually fulfilling pursuits.⁵⁸

Taken to its ultimate end, the beauty myth potentially frees men to go about their business with little or no resistance from women too busy assessing and critiquing themselves in their mirrors. In addition, businessmen also profit, as women in pursuit of the beauty ideal rush headlong into their upscale department stores and downtown drug stores, in search of the perfect/perfecting products. In the end, the only real winners in women's race toward the beauty ideal are men and the fashion, beauty and media industries.

WOMEN'S AND TEEN MAGAZINES: HELPFUL HANDBOOKS ON IDEAL FEMININITY

For those women who choose to pursue the feminine beauty ideal, assistance comes neatly packaged in the glossy pages of women's magazines. Produced "just for her," women's magazines constitute a significant and ubiquitous element of women's culture. Invited into the homes of millions of women,⁵⁹ they are for all women an almost inescapable entity in daily life, omnipresent in those places where women often find themselves held captive, including doctor's offices and supermarket checkout stands. As everyday agents in the process of gender socialization and construction, these magazines market themselves as women's lifestyle handbooks.

Through both content and pictures, they overtly advise and subtly suggest how women should look, dress, and behave; they even more subtly suggest, through the exclusion of pictures and content, how women should *not* look, dress and behave.⁶⁰

However, before a woman can avail herself of the copious advice in a particular women's magazine, she must first notice the magazine and be interested enough to open it up. Thus, there is no overestimating the importance of a cover to a magazine's ability to draw a reader in, particularly in the case of women's periodicals. At least initially, whether the magazine gets picked up, perused, pored over or purchased often depends upon the seductive wiles of the cover.⁶¹

The cover has four important and interrelated functions: as an advertisement, an identity, a semiotic system, and a frame.⁶² As an advertisement, the cover markets both its editorial "self" and its advertisers. It serves as a self-portrait of sorts, illustrating the magazine's identity, particularly as a genre – revealing and promoting itself to an associated readership.⁶³ The semiotic system of a cover has three components: picture, text, and color. The "principle image" on the cover is the photograph, which is noticed first, before the text. The photo and text are interactive and support each other and their common mission, which is to invite readers inside the magazine. The verbal text and cover photo are influenced by a third "communicator" – color. Color can be used to unite elements, "pop-out" certain meanings, or signify concepts, such as seasons or holidays. Finally, as the true "first page" of a magazine, the cover acts as an interpretive frame through which the rest of the magazine is read. John Berger uses the metaphor of a window to explain the

cover's framing function. Covers – particularly those of women's magazines – offer the onlooker not just a “window” into the magazine, but also into their ideal self.⁶⁴

Through much of the history of women's magazines, two kinds of “ideal selves” found representation on the cover: the domestic homemaker of “service” magazines and the fashionable beauty of “fashion” magazines.⁶⁵ The most oft-cited contemporary exemplars of service magazines, known as the “Seven Sisters,” are: *Good Housekeeping*, *Family Circle*, *Women's Day*, *Redbook*, *McCall's*, *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Better Homes and Gardens*. At the beginning of the 20th century, *Better Homes* founder E. T. Meredith described the content of the service magazine in opposition to the fashion magazine; service magazines like his, he asserted, contained “no fiction, no fashion, no piffle, no passion.”⁶⁶ However, the line of demarcation between the two, which had never been completely rigid, blurred over time. Today, the difference is that of primary focus: The main mission of service magazines is to give women readers advice and direction in navigating the day-to-day (usually domestic-related) challenges of life, while the main mission of fashion magazines is to represent the feminine beauty ideal, and to assist women in its achievement.

However, the increasing prevalence of beauty and fashion sections in magazines once completely dedicated to domesticity offers a telling indicator of the ideological dominance of the beauty myth in contemporary women's culture.⁶⁷ Today, it is not uncommon for a women's service magazine to sport a cover that features a large picture of a rich, calorie-dense, mouth-watering dessert, and right next to it a caption reading: “lose weight – fast!” This modern schizophrenic mix of

ultra-decadent “food porn” and the thin body ideal essentially mirrors the bulimic activities of bingeing and purging.⁶⁸

Betty Friedan (in)famously undertook one of the first formal textual analyses of women’s magazines in her groundbreaking feminist treatise of 1963, *The Feminine Mystique*.⁶⁹ Examining women’s magazines of the 1950's and 60's, Friedan found to her displeasure that they were “crammed full of food, clothing, cosmetics, furniture, and the physical bodies of young women, with limiting portrayals of women as mothers, housewives and sex objects,”⁷⁰ replacing earlier representations of “spirited career girls” of the 1930's and 1940's.⁷¹ The discovery left Friedan asking of women’s magazines, “[...] where is the world of thought and ideas, the life of the mind and spirit?”⁷²

Since Friedan, a considerable number of researchers have documented the representation of gender in women's magazines, producing a vast historical overview of these popular culture artifacts. The body of evidence amassed thus far suggests that modern mainstream women's magazines rather consistently support traditional gender-roles,⁷³ gender-stereotypical occupations,⁷⁴ the importance of youth, beauty and heterosexual romance,⁷⁵ and the role of consumption in the attainment of these ideals.⁷⁶ In other words, women's magazines support and promote the feminine beauty ideal as constructed by the beauty myth of patriarchal capitalism.

Not surprisingly, women's bodies hold center stage in women’s magazines, exemplified in illustrations, and advised about and agonized over in articles. Actresses and models, as the reigning representatives of the female body ideal, primp

and preen in fashion spreads and cosmetic advertisements. (Roget's Thesaurus offers "model" as a synonym for "ideal").⁷⁷ These contemporary body goddesses are thin beyond the attainment-ability of the average (size 12) American woman⁷⁸ – and often, due to the computerized tweaking of images, even beyond their own attainment-ability.⁷⁹ Not coincidentally, the bodies that parade through women's magazines are overwhelmingly white. In fact, in the somewhat acromic world of print media, even models of color have "white" features such as thin noses, light skin, and straight hair – and this is case for magazines and advertising marketed to both white and black women.⁸⁰

As sociologist Erving Goffman pointed out in his book, *Gender Advertisements*, the bodies portrayed in magazine photographs do more than model clothes; they also present "gender displays" that represent the gendered relations of "real life."⁸¹ When sociologist Diana Crane analyzed pictures of *Vogue* magazine models across five decades, she found a disturbing trend in which feminine body displays steadily moved from modest to sexual, while simultaneously becoming more childlike and subordinate.⁸² If, as Goffman theorized, mediated gender displays are related to real world gender interactions, then this visual progression seems to illustrate a problematic state in contemporary gender relations.⁸³

Although gender lessons are a constant throughout our lives, the early phase of learning seems a particularly eventful and influential pedagogical period.⁸⁴ Puberty, in particular, heralds a time when young women begin to turn their attentions toward the intensive study of gender,⁸⁵ and there is evidence from

interview data that female adolescents use teen magazines – the “little sisters” of women’s magazines, as primary textbooks.⁸⁶ Unlike women’s magazines, which have a parallel format in men’s magazines, teen magazines – despite their unisex moniker – are produced for young women only. So while teenage boys may read magazines such as *Sports Illustrated* and *Maxim*, these magazines are not written for and marketed to them directly, as is the case with teen magazines and adolescent girls. In this way, girls are being targeted by the magazine industry for more overt age-specific gender direction than boys. This imbalance alone seems to indicate that teen magazines are worthy of study.

Peirce suggests that there may be no more fertile ground for socialization than the heart and mind of the teenage female – and that many teen girls are, in fact, “dependent” on these magazines for direction.⁸⁷ Additionally, unlike adult women who have attained a certain amount of self-understanding and are able to read women’s magazines somewhat critically,⁸⁸ female adolescents are often embarked on a mission of self-discovery that potentially makes them more susceptible to the rhetoric and worldview of teen magazines.⁸⁹

As a transition into the lifelong continuum of women’s “how-to” guides, it should not surprise that the messages of teen magazines rarely conflict with those of their “older sisters” – or even with each other.⁹⁰ Teen magazines reflect a younger parallel universe in relation to their adult counterparts, depicting a world inhabited by thin, beautiful white women,⁹¹ who spend their time pursuing beauty and heterosexual relationships.⁹² These gender primers offer young women explicit

instruction toward achieving these goals through the interrelated means of consumption⁹³ and sexual allure.⁹⁴

The various messages in teen magazines support each other, both within and between magazines. For instance, it is relatively easy to follow the overarching linear logic that a heterosexual romantic relationship necessitates that the reader be beautiful and sexy, both of which take products and body work to achieve. However, certain discourses are potentially more contradictory and present a challenge to integrate. Key among these are messages regarding sex and sexuality. At first glance, any rhetoric about sexuality seems somewhat transgressive in a teen magazine, due in part to the age of the readership as well as to the “wholesome” image of these magazines historically. Read more closely, however, the discourses on sexuality most often support rigid traditional gender roles. A tension exists between messages about “sexual decision making versus sexual signification via costuming, cosmetics and body image” – i.e., being sexual vs. being sexy.⁹⁵ Often, this tension emanates from the contradictory goals of advertising and editorial copy, as advertisers cajole young women to buy products that signal sexiness, while editors strongly encourage controlling sexuality.⁹⁶ This tension is most often resolved by the editors, who tend to advise using a controlled sexiness to “get a guy,”⁹⁷ and then controlling the sexual relationship once the guy is gotten.⁹⁸ Thus, despite the magazines’ superficial flirting with transgression through sex-talk and imagery, teen magazines resolve sexual dilemmas by relying on very familiar sexual dichotomies in which women are sexy objects and men are sexual pursuers.⁹⁹

Interestingly, the influx of young women into higher education and the workplace simply hasn't found much representation in the pages of teen magazines. Although industry leader, *Seventeen*, purports to cover "... fashion, beauty, health, fitness, food, cars, *college*, *careers*, talent, entertainment, fiction, plus crucial personal and global issues,"¹⁰⁰ there is actually very little emphasis on education and occupations between its covers. When Kate Peirce investigated representations of work in the fiction stories of *Seventeen* and *Teen*, she found people assigned to jobs in very gender-stereotypical ways. My own investigations of the distribution of jobs and jobholders throughout *Seventeen* have found a similarly gendered occupational world, one in which men hold not just the majority of the jobs mentioned, but also the most powerful and prestigious occupations.¹⁰¹ Women, on the other hand, are most often represented as assistants and secretaries. In short, men continue to dominate the labor market in the world of *Seventeen*. Instead, the real work of women, as represented in teen magazines, is *body* work, and the most prestigious career path ends at fashion modeling.¹⁰²

EXAMINING TEXTS WITHIN CONTEXT

How do we explain the dominance of the beauty myth discourse in magazines that market themselves as guides for the improvement of women's lives? Understanding how and why prevalent media narratives develop in the ways that they do requires envisioning the "whole picture" of media. This means placing media texts within a larger relational system that includes their creators, their readers, and the social world in which they are produced. Wendy Griswold conceptualizes each of

these as points (text, creator, consumer and social world) on a “cultural diamond,” with linkages connecting each one to the others.¹⁰³ This model contextualizes media products within their broader historical, social and economic environment – which in the case of contemporary western media includes patriarchal capitalism. In addition, it reminds us that the visible media products and formats with which we interact are the result of the somewhat invisible labor of real (i.e., living, breathing, thinking, opinionated) human beings.¹⁰⁴

Privileges and inequalities based in gender, class, race, sexuality, and body characteristics shape and influence each of the points of the media system, as well as their relationships to each other. For example, despite the inroads of feminism, patriarchy continues to structure most western workplaces and employment hierarchies,¹⁰⁵ and this pattern holds true for media organizations, whose corporate boardrooms and prestigious corner offices are populated by white upper-class men.¹⁰⁶

This top echelon of executives and owners may be the least empirically researched dimension of media, due in part to the relative inaccessibility of the corporate suite and its powerful residents. More research exists on the less elite middle-echelon managers and production staff in media industries, revealing that women and people of color remain underrepresented in the media workforce as a whole.¹⁰⁷ As feminist theorist Dorothy Smith points out, this is a problematic state of affairs, since restricting culture-making to just one group of people (in this case, affluent white western men) results in a single-standpoint media system that excludes and devalues the voices and viewpoints of the majority of the population.¹⁰⁸

However, the dominance of the beauty myth in women's magazines becomes an even more bewildering question when we consider that both women's and teen magazines employ a higher percentage of women editors and writers than other media formats.¹⁰⁹ Dorothy Smith provides one explanation, asking us to look a little closer – or more accurately, to look a little higher. Although women may be running the magazine workplace, their work is overseen and controlled by corporate executives and owners, most of whom are elite men. Thus, it isn't as surprising that women's magazines would reproduce the dominant ideology, ultimately sustaining a broader mandate of gender hegemony. A historical study of the “Seven Sisters” magazines seems to back this up. Examining the ratio of women editors in relation to the magazines' gendered ideologies over a twenty year period (1965-1985), the authors found no reduction in gender stereotypical messages even as the number of women editors increased.¹¹⁰

Recently, sociologist Melissa Milkie received rare access to the editorial enclaves of two national teen magazines.¹¹¹ Her interviews with 10 editors (9 women and 1 man, all white) offer considerable insight into the rationalizations that these mostly women editors make in choosing images and content for a teen magazine and its readership. Milkie asked the editors to respond to what she termed the “real girl” critique, in which young women readers ask to see more authentic “real girl” representations and models in the magazine. The editors' responses fell into two categories: in the first, they legitimated the critique, essentially agreeing with its validity, but expressing powerlessness in accommodating it; and in the second, they

delegitimated the critique, accusing it of being invalid. When they validated the critique, they listed three types of organizational and/or institutional restraints that impinged on their ability to effect change: 1) the art world (including photographer preferences), 2) advertiser influence, and 3) the broader (patriarchal) culture. When dismissing the critique, they argued three other points: 1) the critique was “misguided” – i.e., nobody really wanted to see pictures of fat ugly girls with freckles and braces, 2) fashion is fantasy and not meant to be authentic, and 3) the magazine's overall discourse was empowering and (therefore) counterbalanced any unrealistic or potentially harmful imagery. Although Milkie correctly identifies the editors as “key players in the ‘relations of ruling’ that define femininity,”¹¹² the editors’ expressions of ambivalence, powerlessness, and even defensive acceptance of the status quo seem to reflect significant impotence in their ability to “rule.”

In accordance with a vast amount of existing research, these teen magazine editors recognized, affirmed, and spoke at length about the direct and indirect power that advertisers wield in the production of magazines. This is not just the case for magazines, however; most mainstream media productions simply could not afford to operate without the financial assistance of advertising.¹¹³ This financial dependency often necessitates that media texts serve a latent function of providing consumption-friendly environments for the embedded advertisements and commercials.¹¹⁴ Relatedly, it encourages media producers to actively shy away from controversial or disturbing topics, as well as from content that would attract or appeal to a less economically endowed constituency.¹¹⁵

The importance and dominance of advertising in their production provides one explanation for the entrenchment of the beauty myth in women's magazines. With an average ratio of 60% advertising to 40% editorial content, Jean Kilbourne describes modern women's magazines as being nothing more than "catalogs of goods."¹¹⁶ Advertising is such a necessary element in the production of women's magazines that advertisers are sometimes even given veto power over editorial copy.¹¹⁷ Incongruence between the ideologies of the advertisers and a media product's editorial mission almost inevitably leads to failure for the media product. Thus, because advertisers have very gender-stereotypical perceptions of their market-populations,¹¹⁸ media products with non-gender-stereotypical messages are often doomed.

The experience of three very different women's magazines, *Lear's*, *Ms*, and *Sassy*, offer illustrative examples of this dynamic. *Lear's*, marketed to the more mature woman, promised to avoid articles on domesticity and beauty in lieu of more serious, socially/politically relevant articles.¹¹⁹ While *Lear's* was able to attract plenty of readers, it eventually failed due to lack of advertiser support. Gloria Steinem tells a similar story from her tenure as editor of *Ms* magazine.¹²⁰ Despite an aggressive campaign to convince advertisers that the "*Ms* Woman" spent money on "women's" products (makeup, personal care, food) as well as "men's" products (cars and electronics), *Ms* could not garner enough advertising to support the magazine. There were two reasons for this: 1) the magazine staff would not promise to run "complementary" copy on the advertiser in the editorial pages (McCracken refers to

this common practice as “covert advertising”¹²¹), and 2) most advertisers’ were not interested in the *Ms* reader as a buyer. As Leonard Lauder, president of cosmetic giant Estee Lauder, explained to Steinem, his company was selling “a kept-woman mentality” – and he did not believe the readers of *Ms* met that criteria.¹²²

Finally, the rise and fall of *Sassy*, a magazine marketed to teen girls from 1988 to 1996, offers another example of what can happen to an alternative voice trying to join the mainstream chorus. *Sassy* set out to be different from its teen magazine counterparts.¹²³ To this end, it railed against gender-stereotypes, questioned gender norms, and explored social issues rather than celebrities. Ultimately, however, *Sassy* couldn’t compete in the teen magazine field, in part because advertisers were not comfortable with the magazine’s “subversive” content.¹²⁴ Upon its demise, *Sassy* was quickly supplanted by several new teen magazines, including *TeenVogue*, *ElleGirl*, *TeenPeople*, and *CosmoGirl* – all true “little sisters” of mainstream women’s magazines – and the familiar gender song and dance continued.

LOOKING BACK TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT: INVESTIGATING THE ORIGINS OF THE TEEN MAGAZINE

Contenders for the hearts and dollars of the teen girl reader have come and gone in the competitive teen magazine field, but none have ever been able to knock the original and reigning “queen of the teens” from her throne. First published in 1944, *Seventeen* magazine remains unchallenged as the top selling teen magazine, with a readership surpassing 13 million nationwide.¹²⁵ In addition, the magazine,

which is currently owned by the Hearst Corporation, has branched out globally, publishing international editions in the Philippines, Indonesia, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, South Korea, Russia, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador,¹²⁶ and electronically, through its website, www.seventeen.com.

In 2004, this *grande dame* of the teen magazine genre acknowledged its 60th birthday in its October issue (one month beyond its actual September birthdate), featuring actress Katie Holmes as cover girl [See Figure 1, Appendix B]. Directly under the hot pink *seventeen* logo skimming Holmes' flawless forehead, a large bright yellow caption invites the reader to "celebrate!" Although the celebratory event is ostensibly the magazine's 60th anniversary, its announcement in a tiny green oval on the upper right side of the page is overshadowed by the larger white caption directly beneath "celebrate!" that reads "Your Personal Style" – making this, not the anniversary, the apparent *objet d'célébration*. Underneath it, bright yellow star bullets mark hot pink captions that list the facets of "your" personal style – and, not coincidentally, the parameters of the feminine beauty ideal:

- Hair
- Makeup
- Clothes
- Body

A final hot pink italicized caption, this time in the bottom right corner of the page, signals the ultimate goal of all that potential body work: *Love*. Together, these individual symbols on the cover – picture, text, color – converge and mingle to tell a familiar story: Beauty through grooming and consumption will lead to *love*. The

modern beauty myth. *Seventeen*, on the occasion of its 60th anniversary, was directing its readers to celebrate (and pursue) ideal femininity.

This cover, so ordinary by the standards of contemporary teen magazines, is actually ironic in light of *Seventeen's* origins. *Seventeen* magazine began publication in September of 1944, the brainchild of founding editor-in-chief Helen Valentine, a working mother and grandmother who imagined and created a theretofore novel publishing entity: a magazine devoted to the education, edification, and entertainment of young women of high school age. Valentine affectionately referred to *Seventeen* as her “baby,” a deserved sobriquet, as she did, quite literally, deliver a new magazine genre to the industry – the teen magazine.

This original teen magazine, however, was a world away from its latter-day relations. Valentine envisioned a magazine that balanced fashion with service, addressing teen girls as “whole human beings” and future American leaders, and she and her (nearly all women) staffers brought that vision to life in the pages of their ground-breaking magazine. Together, they filled *Seventeen* with passionate progressive discourse about gender and racial equality, religious freedom and tolerance, world citizenship and community volunteerism. Fashion spreads, grooming features, and fiction stories were counterbalanced with articles about art and science, government and politics, geography and social studies, education and employment, and service to one’s community, nation, and world. In short, they paid serious attention to a young woman’s “life of the mind,” something that Betty Friedan found sadly lacking in women’s magazines of a later era.¹²⁷

As with Betty Friedan before me, my comparison of magazine discourse “then and now” leaves me reeling with questions: How did this happen? Under what conditions did *Seventeen* enter the world and how (and why) was it transformed from a magazine that took young women seriously as “whole human beings,” to just another in an entire genre that is critiqued for objectifying and trivializing young women as shopping bodies in search of romance? Can we find a possible explanation by looking back to its origins?

Certainly, the research literature on teen magazines that exists today cannot answer such specific questions, but neither can it offer much in the way of a more general explanation. By and large, most analyses of teen magazines focus on their relevance as contemporary documents while virtually ignoring their historical trajectories. In addition, researchers have under-theorized the relationship of these magazines to the social worlds and cultural breeding grounds in which they are created. Thus, examinations of teen magazines frequently concentrate on the discourse within the text,¹²⁸ while ignoring material realities, including the social relations of the magazine owners, editorial staff and advertisers. In particular, there has been very little research on the production-side of women’s magazines as opposed to the wealth of information that has been collected on the texts themselves. The role of gender and class in the creation of magazines, however, is an important piece of the gender/media puzzle. By ignoring this level of production, we are missing valuable information about the “relations of ruling.”¹²⁹ In sum, most of the research on teen magazines has examined the text as if it stands alone in time and space.

My dissertation addresses these gaps by uncovering the historical roots and revealing the human creators of the reigning “queen of the teens,” *Seventeen* magazine. Using a case study approach, I investigate the magazine as both a business and a text, using a multi-methodological strategy that includes quantitative and qualitative textual analysis, interviews and oral histories, and a search of historical sources (both primary and secondary). [Please see Appendix A, Research Method, for a detailed account of the study design, periodization, methods, and brief chapter summaries]. This research will extend existing gender/media scholarship by examining *Seventeen* in the context of its place in history and the political economy. It will also illuminate the often invisible relationship between *Seventeen* as a text and the people who created it. Finally, it will find in *Seventeen's* origins the seeds of the teen magazine genre and teen girl ideal that exist today.

CHAPTER 2

The Birth of the Teen Magazine: Delivering *Seventeen* to the American Marketplace

Teenager. Today, this singular word immediately elicits a myriad of visual images and conceptual stereotypes. Raging hormones and bare midriffs. Tattoos and body piercings. Acne and cosmetics. Valley girls and mall rats. The images flash fast and furious, with little or no extra cognitive labor, in part because teens have become such a ubiquitous part of our culture: they inhabit our environment, our media, our psyches. Teens, it seems, are everywhere!

As hard as it is to imagine in this day and age when youth seem(s) to rule the culture, teenagers are really – at least as a social category – a rather recent cultural construction. G. Stanley Hall is most often credited with introducing the idea of adolescence as a specific (and troublesome) state of life through his widely read 1904 psychology text, *Adolescence*.¹ Historians report that the word itself, in its first incarnation as the hyphenated “teen-ager,” didn’t become a part of the popular lexicon until the late 1930’s and early 1940’s.² *The New York Times*, for example, first used the word “teen-ager” in an article on October 18, 1942.³ That news item documented the sale of war stamps to high school girls at the New York department store Saks, described as “the biggest concerted effort yet staged by ‘teen-agers in the war stamp drive.”⁴

It is not surprising that this first editorial reference mentions “teen-age” girls in relation to a consumer event at a department store, since retailers and advertisers

signaled their awareness of this age group long before other media. In fact, advertisements for department store “teen shops” and other similarly named teen-specific department store areas began appearing in newspapers and magazines nearly a decade before any editorial mention of teen-agers. The first teen-targeted advertisement in the *New York Times* ran on October 4, 1934 in an announcement for the opening of New York City department store Lord & Taylor’s “new shop for girls of 12, 14, 16.”⁵ The ad heralded the retailer’s teen shop as a unique “solution” to a teen apparel “problem” (perhaps an early equivalent to a contemporary teen’s “clothing crisis”) :

Here you will find clothes that reach a happy compromise between “mother’s little girl” and the “I’m grown up” idea. We have designed suitable things for this difficult in between age [...] and we’re calling it the in-be-teen shop.⁶

In addition, special teen-sized clothing was also just beginning to come to market. Prior to the 1920’s, females could buy ready-made clothing in either children’s or women’s sizes. In the subsequent two decades, however, savvy retailers and clothing manufacturers became increasingly aware of the sales potential for both college- and high school-age women. As a result, they began to manufacture and market clothing for these two age “niches,” first with “junior” sizes for older teens and college-aged girls, and later with “teen” sizes for their less mature younger sisters. Although women’s and junior’s clothes sported different size ranges, they similarly were cut for a woman’s fuller figure, with its developed hips and breasts. Teen sizes (8 or 10 to 16), on the other hand, were produced to fit the leaner, straighter, less developed figure of a “budding” woman.⁷

Thus, it was not mere coincidence that the decade of the 1940's saw the birth and early development of *Seventeen*, the first fashion and service magazine targeted to high school age girls. Indeed, the logic of the market explains *Seventeen's* conception during the same period that the "teen-ager" was being actively constructed in the culture. Scholars of both gender and popular culture have long noted women's magazines' enduring history as vehicles for "consumer education" and their role as conduit between women buyers and the marketplace.⁸ By the early 1940's, retailers had identified a new consumer group (girl teen-agers) and a corresponding market (teen-age girl clothing) and *Seventeen* emerged as a vehicle to bring the two together. Upon its entry into this cultural construction zone, *Seventeen* became one of the major producers of teen girl culture.

The first issue of *Seventeen*, published in New York City and distributed across the United States, hit newsstands in September of 1944. While other magazines targeting adolescent girls existed at that time, each differed in fairly significant ways from *Seventeen*. For instance, *Calling All Girls*, published by *Parents Magazine* beginning in July 1941, was geared toward a slightly younger readership – girls referred to today as "preteens" or "tweens."⁹ In the 1943/44 edition of *The Writer's Market*, a biannual publication for freelance writers which listed editorial descriptions of individual magazines, *Calling All Girls* reported that it contained articles "on subjects that appeal to girls of 9 to 14."¹⁰ With slightly smaller dimensions than today's contemporary magazines, *Calling All Girls* featured a heavy dose of light reading: mostly comics and fiction stories, interspersed with

informative non-fiction on “real girls” and their interests, as well as advertisements for clothing, grooming aids, and snacks.

Another competitor in the girls' magazine market of the early 1940's was *The American Girl*. Published by The Girl Scouts of America from 1917 through 1979, *The American Girl* featured short stories and articles deemed “suitable for girls of teen-age.”¹¹ Such “suitable” territory covered the lives of people in other countries, grooming advice, and Girl Scout history and current events. As with *Calling All Girls*, *The American Girl* included advertisements for grooming, medicinal, and hygienic products, auto and appliance companies, and of course, Girl Scout affiliated merchandise; however, ads in *The American Girl* made up a much smaller proportion of the total magazine content than did the ads in *Calling All Girls*. In addition, *The American Girl's* readership was defined, and therefore restricted, by membership in the Girl Scouts. Other “girl” magazines of the period also limited their market, often by religious denomination demarcations. For instance, *The Catholic Girl* and *Catholic Miss* were published for young Catholic women, while *Queens' Gardens* marketed itself as appropriate for Christian girls.¹²

The magazine closest in spirit and strategy to *Seventeen*, however, was neither *Calling All Girls* nor *The American Girl*, but instead, *Mademoiselle*. *Mademoiselle* magazine debuted in February, 1935 as an alternative for young women ages 18 through 34 who were interested in fashion specifically geared to their (as opposed to their mothers') age and spending range.¹³ Subtitled, *The Magazine for Smart Young Women* – “smart” having a double meaning of both “intelligent” and “fashionable” –

Mademoiselle strove to integrate both concepts into the magazine's overall mission. Editor-in-chief Betsy Talbot Blackwell's concern for her readership as "whole persons" materialized on the page in the form of quality art and fiction.¹⁴ Although *Mademoiselle* ceased publication in 2001, it left behind a long and enduring legacy of publishing fiction by great writers, including John Cheever, William Faulkner, Carson McCullers, Sylvia Plath, and Truman Capote.

Despite the fact that it was marketed to a slightly older constituency, *Mademoiselle* could be regarded as *Seventeen's* cultural foremother. A 1946 *Business Week* article listed *Mademoiselle* among the primary "antecedents of the teen-age exploitation" of the 40's.¹⁵ Blackwell, *Mademoiselle's* editor from 1937-1971, recognized the economic value in identifying a very specific audience as a demographic consumer market "niche." With the help of Helen Valentine, her promotion director from 1939 - 1944, Blackwell made *Mademoiselle* hugely successful with both readers and advertisers by targeting upper/middle-class college-age women – a group who had the potential to become influential consumers.¹⁶ Upon its debut, *Seventeen* magazine would also use a similar strategy in marketing itself and its readership.

Seventeen entered the women's magazine market in 1944 as a bridge between existing girls' magazines (e.g., *Calling All Girls* and *American Girl*) and young women's magazines (e.g., *Mademoiselle*). Of course, the magazine industry doesn't operate in a social vacuum, and this period is also notable for having been darkened by the shadow of a constantly looming presence: World War II. Although the war

was slowly drawing to a close in 1944, Americans (and other world citizens) remained immersed in the human drama and challenges that wartime presents. Almost a year would go by after *Seventeen's* arrival before V-E Day (Victory in Europe) and V-J Day (Victory in Japan) would signal the end to the war and the beginning of a new era in America and the world.

In the case of both women and their magazines, however, the cloud of war held an unexpected silver lining. For the magazine industry in general, the war meant paper quotas that often forced periodicals to turn down advertising or even to cease publication. On the other hand, it also offered opportunities for new magazines, such as *Seventeen*, to take advantage of the changing cultural terrain.

During the war, the U.S. government worked in tandem with advertisers and media to craft an extraordinary propaganda campaign directed at women.¹⁷ By the time *Seventeen* began production, the Office of War Information (OWI) and the War Advertising Council were in full swing, barraging women with a full arsenal of media messages that urged them to support the war effort through their labor and with their pocketbooks. In order to ensure that women received the “right” messages on a regular basis, the OWI distributed several helpful publications to magazine editors, foremost among them the *Magazine War Guide (MWG)*, which offered monthly article suggestions integrating “[...] war information suitable for use in magazines.”¹⁸

Another OWI publication, *War Jobs for Women*,” was distributed to both editors and the public at large and listed the amazing breadth of employment opportunities open to women during the war and which they were strongly encouraged to pursue.¹⁹ “It’s

a woman's war right now," the brochure proclaimed, "and women should be thinking in terms of going to full-time work and carrying along many of their volunteer activities as side lines."²⁰

Records kept by the OWI indicate that American magazine editors followed the *MWG's* directives when choosing material for publication during this period.²¹ American women, too, took their marching orders seriously, securing employment outside of the home, volunteering for community war efforts, and spending their money frugally and patriotically.²² Women in the workforce were given access to jobs in male-dominated industries that had previously been beyond their reach, many with man-sized wages that brought more money into their households.²³ Many working mothers (both paid and volunteer) turned over their home duties to their teen-age daughters, giving them a real life lesson in overseeing a family's consumer needs and economic resources.²⁴

Although World War II historians often focus on women's increased employment rates during the war, others note that consumer spending also surged during this period.²⁵ As durable goods became less available due to war needs, manufacturers and advertisers put their efforts into making and marketing non-durable goods, such as clothing. At the same time, teen girls were becoming more and more responsible for spending – both their own earnings and the household income. Thus, the war gave teen-age girls a new-found economic power, individually and as family managers. It created a very special meeting place for a market and a consumer to meet and find love. And the rest, as they say, is (consumption) history.

A 1946 *Business Week* article entitled, “Teen-age Market: It’s Terrif.!” marveled at the deep and wide teen market that developed during the war period, measuring it via four indicators: 1) increased spending of teen girls; 2) clothing lines developed just for teen girls; 3) “teen-shops” in which to buy them; and – most relevantly to our story – 4) the introduction of the teen magazine genre.²⁶

This was the fertile breeding ground in which *Seventeen* was conceived, gestated and birthed. And just as with most human births, two people – a man and a woman – were present at its conception: Triangle Publishing’s owner, Walter H. Annenberg and *Seventeen*’s first editor-in-chief, Helen Valentine. In many ways, their different personal trajectories led them both to this fateful partnership and historic production.

MEET HELEN VALENTINE²⁷

Helen Rose Lachman Valentine was the only child of German Jewish immigrants, Gustave Lachman and Bertha (Kahn) Lachman. Born on June 25, 1893, Helen spent her childhood – and most of her adult life – in the New York City borough of Manhattan. Her mother was a career homemaker, while her father supported the family as an accountant and businessman. Although most indications point to the family’s economic status as upper middle class, Helen alluded to periods of financial instability in her oral history: “In spite of the fact that we went through many physical changes, financial changes [laugh], quite a bit of drama on the outside, the inside was always calm.”²⁸ She hinted at this again when asked about whether her mother did the family cooking. Helen answered “No. Well, she did sometimes and

sometimes we had help. We went through ... various [laugh] life stages.”²⁹

Helen was extremely close to her mother, a constant nurturing presence in her young life. Mother and daughter mirrored each other in their similarly gentle demeanors and optimistic personalities. Gustave, on the other hand, was the polar opposite of his wife and daughter. Although Helen remembers her father fondly, her relationship with him lacked the closeness of her relationship with her mother. She describes him in a thoughtful manner that also indicates her lifelong trait of focusing on the positive:

He was very Teutonic, in the best and the worst senses of the word. In other words, he had a wonderful mind, he was bright, he had a great deal of the spark and ambition that German people have, but he also was terrifically domineering and strict. There’s a German word, “Punkt!” That’s what he was [laugh].³⁰

Helen accompanied her mother to Jewish temple on Saturdays, attended Jewish Sunday School as a child and Jewish High School (the Ethical Culture School) as a teenager. Still, she reports that she did not grow up in “what you would call a really religious home.”³¹ “I went to Sunday school” she laughingly states. “It didn’t take, but I went [laugh].” Helen gives an example of her family’s lack of religious orthodoxy – as well as of her own optimistic spirit – when she talks of the family’s “inclusive” holiday traditions: “We didn’t have a big Christmas, but I always hung up a stocking just the same [laugh]. Hopefully [laugh].”³²

If the family did experience any financial downturns during Helen’s childhood, they did not appear to adversely affect the economic and/or emotional circumstances of Helen’s life. Her parents sent her to a private high school, followed

by Barnard College, a prestigious and expensive all-women's college affiliated with Columbia University in New York City. In reflecting over her early family life, Helen remembers it as almost gilded:

I had a very happy, relaxed childhood, a very happy education. I was delighted. I went to the Ethical Culture School, where I was very happy. I went to Barnard, where I was very happy, and I didn't feel the need to do anything outside at that time at all.³³

Helen graduated from Barnard with a degree in English in 1915 and in 1920, she married the man who would share her life for 58 years, Hebert Irwin Valentine (known as "Big Val"). Although Helen reports that she never planned on working outside the home, she happily engaged in paid employment most of her adult life. As she describes it, after several years of spending her time at home caring for both Big Val and her father (who lived with the newlyweds after her mother's death), she developed an "itch" that demanded to be scratched:

I began to get a little itchy, wanted to do something, and that's how I decided that probably the best thing I could do would be to use what little writing ability I had and, in trying to decide which field to go into, I picked a very natural one, which was advertising. It was logical.³⁴

Once Helen made the decision to join the workforce, she jumped in with both feet. She began her career in 1922 as a copywriter for the Lord & Thomas Advertising Agency in New York City, staying there until 1930, when she was among 26 people at that agency who lost their jobs on the same day due to cutbacks necessitated by the Depression-era economy.³⁵ Similar layoffs were occurring industry-wide, making jobs a scarce commodity. Helen, however, refused to return to homemaking. She turned to her logical and creative mind for a solution:

So I went home [after being laid off] and thought about it and I said, 'Well, the agency business is dead right now, but there must be some other way to use whatever little talent you have,' and I decided that maybe it would be a good idea to see if I could promote something that I knew something about and that I was interested in, and by some strange coincidence, the mail brought me a piece of promotion from *Vogue* and it was one of the snootiest pieces of writing that you ever could have read, and I thought, 'I've got it!' I called up and I asked for the name of the promotion director, which happened to be Mr. Keep, O.D. Keep, of blessed memory, an absolutely darling man, and I called Mr. Keep and I asked him if I could come in and talk to him, and he said, 'what about?' and I said, 'well, I'm interested in *Vogue* and I just would love to come in and talk to you, and nothing may come of it, but I would be enormously grateful if you would give me a few minutes. So he said, "Okay, come in."³⁶

Helen impressed Keep with her promotional ideas, enough so that he arranged a meeting for her with Conde Nast, *Vogue* publisher and head of Conde Nast Publications. Publisher Nast ran a tight and well-controlled ship – no one was brought on board without his approval. He was a powerful man who oversaw the destinies of his workers during a time when jobs were a scarce commodity. Other people might have been intimidated or daunted at the thought of an employment interview under those less than optimal circumstances – but not Helen. Her description of the meeting evidences her confidence:

And when I got there there was on his desk ... there were a couple of proofs from *Vogue* and one of them was a picture of a ... a double spread of a backgammon board with a hand moving a tile. That was the day when backgammon was it. And I suppose Mr. Nast, being gracious and wanting to break the ice, said, after the first how-do-you-do's, 'Do you play backgammon, Mrs. Valentine?' and I said, 'No, Mr. Nast, nor bridge nor golf,' [laugh] whereupon he threw back his head and roared, you know, instead of just looking at me blandly, which he might have. He just thought that was so funny. So we had this long, long, long, long talk and he said, 'You know, you're so critical of what we're doing, would you do something for me? Would you take a piece of our copy and would you rewrite it as you think it should be?' 'Oh,' I said, 'I'd love to,' so that's how I left. Well, when I got

outside, Mr. Keep was standing way down around the corner in the hall with his eyes glued to his wristwatch and he said, 'You were in there forty-five minutes!' [laugh] in this roaring voice in disbelief. [laugh] And so that's how I was hired at Conde█Nast.³⁷

Helen spent the next seven years (1930-37) at Conde█Nast Publications, honing her promotional and editorial skills. During her employment tenure, she worked for the promotions department at *Vogue* and briefly edited the *Vogue Pattern Book*. As an astute and observant student of human nature, Helen also learned about being a benevolent and effective leader – a skill that she would put into action as *Seventeen's* editor-in-chief. One of her teachers was Conde█Nast, whom she remembers fondly:

He was the head of everything. The Conde█Nast Publications, he was Conde█Nast! [laugh]. And a nicer man never lived. [laugh]. He really was a wonderful man to work with. You notice that I said 'work with' and not 'for,' because that's ... Now, you see, that was a slip and that gives you the picture right there. He was absolutely marvelous. He was so appreciative if you did something good and when he was critical he was so right and so gentle and so careful about it, you know. He just was a remarkable, remarkable man, and of course talented, uhm, so talented!³⁸

Helen had other talented teachers at *Vogue*, including the renowned Dr. Mehemed Fehmy Agha, one of the most influential magazine art directors of the 20th century, as well as Edna Wohlman Chase, *Vogue's* editor-in-chief. In later years, Helen would express only glowing memories of her time at *Vogue*, despite the fact that she was fired in 1937 and replaced by her assistant, mentoree and (former) best friend – Alice Dickey Thompson.³⁹ This was Thompson's first betrayal of Valentine, but it would not be her last. The final act of their ill-fated friendship would play out at *Seventeen* magazine.

As she had done in the past and as she would later do in the future, Helen rebounded from adversity. In 1938, a year after her forced retreat from *Vogue*, she saw *two* of her literary efforts receive publication: a children's picture book entitled *Mary and Marie* and an etiquette handbook called *Better than Beauty: A Guide to Charm*. Ironically, *Better than Beauty* was co-authored (pre-betrayal) by Valentine's *Vogue* Assistant, Alice Thompson.⁴⁰ The dedication at the beginning of *Better Than Beauty* reads: "to A.T. and H.V. We dedicate this little book to two women who undoubtedly could profit by reading it."⁴¹

Helen's involuntary sabbatical from women's magazines finally came to an end, heralded in an advertising news column from the March 18, 1939 issue of *The New York Times*, which noted: "Helen Valentine, formerly editor of *Vogue Pattern Book*, has been appointed promotion director of *Mademoiselle*." "Millie," as *Mademoiselle* staffers affectionately referred to the magazine,⁴² had been in publication for four years when Helen came on board as promotion director. Once there, Valentine joined editor-in-chief Betsy Blackwell in setting in motion a marketing strategy for *Mademoiselle* that Valentine would later import to *Seventeen*. Blackwell and Valentine worked extensively with clothing manufacturers and retailers to educate them about the buying desires and abilities of young college-age women. Once convinced, the clothing industry responded with "college shops" and lines of clothing targeted to younger women. *Mademoiselle* served as Helen's prep school classroom and she might have stayed at *Mademoiselle* indefinitely if not for a fateful meeting that she would have with publisher Walter Annenberg in early 1944.

This meeting would lead to a marriage of forces in the production of a genre-creating magazine.

MEET WALTER ANNENBERG

On March 13, 1908, when 15-year old Helen Valentine was a student at Manhattan's Ethical Culture School, Moses and Sadie Annenberg welcomed a baby boy named Walter Hubert Annenberg into their home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Moe and Sadie had already seen the births of five daughters, and three more daughters would follow Walter.⁴³ But as the only boy, Walter held a special position in this large Jewish family. So significant, in fact, that his mother and sisters affectionately referred to him by his privileged gender label, calling him simply "Boy."⁴⁴ In order to understand the adult and businessman that "Boy" would grow up to become, he has to be viewed in relation to his family, and in particular, to his father.

Walter's mother, Sadie Cecelia Friedman, was born in New York and raised in Chicago in a middle-class home. On the other hand, Walter's father, known as Moe for the first half of his life, and M. L. for the second, came from very different family circumstances. In fact, except for the few blighted years at the very end of his life, Moe's story reads as a classic "rags to riches" tale.⁴⁵

Moses Louis Annenberg was born in Kalwichen, East Prussia (near the Russian border) where his large Jewish family experienced considerable ethnic and religious discrimination. Moe's father left the family to prepare a new life for them in Chicago; a few years later, when Moe was still a child, the family traveled by boat

to join their patriarch in America. Moe and his brother Max threw themselves into the unbridled and unruly capitalism of Chicago in the late 1800's and both fought (often literally) their way from abject poverty to incredible wealth.⁴⁶

Although Moe's parents were Orthodox Jews, Moe eschewed the faith of his childhood as an adult; Sadie, on the other hand, was a faithful synagogue attendee. Walter and his sisters attended Hebrew School until Moses had a falling out with the Rabbi over the family's diminutive donations, after which the children never returned. Sadie mourned the decision, but the children were elated. Still, despite the fact that the family ceased being "practicing" Jews, they would continue to face ongoing discrimination based on their ethnic background.⁴⁷

Upon his arrival to the "new world," Moe became an American, but even more than that, he became a newspaperman. His first newspaper job was as a solicitor (paper boy) for the *Chicago Evening American*, a paper owned by William Randolph Hearst. Moe moved his way up through the ranks at Hearst's company, and in 1906, he had made and saved enough money to found the Chicago News Company, a newspaper distribution service, which later became the Milwaukee News Company.⁴⁸

In 1920, when Walter was 12, Moe moved the family to Long Island, New York, having accepted a prestigious job with the Hearst organization overseeing 19 newspapers and several magazines. Soon after, Hearst asked Moses to take over his company's newest acquisition, the *New York Daily Mirror*. Moe, not for the first time, used underworld connections to assure that the newspaper was able to compete on the street with the *New York Daily News*.⁴⁹

During this period, Walter's family rose from upper-middle class comfort to affluent abundance. The Annenbergs now lived in a sprawling mansion with 32 rooms, including a bowling alley. In an effort to similarly upgrade his moniker, Moe renamed himself M. L., emulating his boss, William Randolph Hearst, who went by W. R. He also began to acquire his own media properties, including the *Daily Racing Form*, the General News racing wire, and the Nationwide News Service.⁵⁰ Nationwide News Service was actually a horse-racing information clearinghouse known as "The Trust" by organized crime.⁵¹ M. L. was well on his way to earning the title "kingpin of the nation's gambling industry," counting mob members Lucky Luciano and Meyer Lansky among his friends.⁵² In 1926, the elder Annenberg finally ended his affiliation with Hearst in order to devote his energies to his own companies. The path that Moses had chosen to forge would make him even more money – but it would also sully his family's reputation and ultimately land him in prison.

While Moses Annenberg amassed his fortune, often through less than reputable means, he was simultaneously doing whatever he could to give his offspring, particularly Walter, the kind of life that he had been denied as a youth. When Walter was 14, Moses sent him to the Peddie School, a Baptist boarding school in Highstown, New Jersey that, unlike the more elite prep schools of the period, did not restrict attendance by Jews.⁵³ After Walter graduated from Peddie in 1927, he briefly attended the Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania. At Penn, he again experienced discrimination as a Jew, despite the fact that he didn't define himself in that way. For example, the most elite fraternities barred Jews from

their membership, so Walter was forced to join Phi Sigma Delta, the college's Jewish fraternity.⁵⁴

Walter was unhappy at college and returned home after just one year to work for his father's company, the Cecelia Investment Company (named after Sadie Cecelia Annenberg). Walter began his service there as a bookkeeper, but moved up through the ranks over time, eventually becoming a vice-president. After Walter came on board, Moses bought several "scandal sheets" and *Screen Guide* magazine; he also founded *Click* magazine. Walter was less than enthusiastic about his father's holdings as a whole; in fact, he found them somewhat crass and embarrassing. One of Walter Annenberg's biographers describes the difference between father and son as that between quantity and quality.⁵⁵ Moses reveled in the vastness of his empire, despite the fact that his many publication holdings ran the gamut from the gaudy to the tawdry to the downright illegal. *Click* offered an excellent example of the former two characteristics. Meant to compete with the extremely popular (and profitable) photomagazines, *Look* and *Life*, *Click*, which featured celebrity cheesecake pictorials and sensationalist copy, looked more like their naughty step-sibling. The Catholic Church condemned it and Canada banned it. Walter wanted his father to sell *Click*, but Moses agreed only to revamp it, shifting its focus from pulpy to patriotic – a replication of a more general shift in magazines that occurred during the World War II years.⁵⁶ Although the Catholic Church and Canada eventually lifted their bans, *Click* never shed its somewhat sleazy image in the public arena.⁵⁷

In the late 1930's, the U.S. government, under the direct orders of President

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, began investigating Moses for income tax evasion, a tactic sometimes used to shut down criminal businessmen who had been able to elude detection for other types of illegal activities. The Annenberg family, however, believed that they were targeted because their Republican-leaning newspapers published critical coverage of Roosevelt and his administration. Whatever the case, Moses was indicted for tax evasion in 1939 and sentenced to prison in 1940. He pled guilty, reportedly in part to save Walter, whom the government was threatening to pull into the case.⁵⁸

Walter was 32 when his 62-year-old father was incarcerated. Two years later, in 1942, the elder Annenberg died of a brain tumor while in prison and 34-year-old Walter inherited the bulk of the “family” dynasty, by then known as Triangle Publications (the name was changed in order to offset some of the bad publicity of the Moses Annenberg’s conviction). Triangle’s holdings at the time of Moses’s death included the *Wisconsin Daily News*, the *Philadelphia Daily News*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Morning Telegraph*, the *Daily Racing Form*, *Screen Guide*, *Click*, and several wire services and magazine “scandal sheets.” Moses’s incarceration and death left Walter in complete control of Triangle and its stock holdings. In fact, the gross inequity of the distribution of Moses’s estate, which financially benefited Walter exponentially beyond his mother and sisters, became a source of family discontent that festered over time. In particular, Walter found himself at odds with his oldest sister, Aye, who was strong-willed and – perhaps relatedly – the only Annenberg sister to attend college. Years later, the strife among Walter and his sisters peaked

when he forced all of his sisters off Triangle's board of directors for, as described by his nephew Ron Krancer, "[getting] on his nerves."⁵⁹

Moses Annenberg's death served as a turning point for Walter. His father had intimidated and dominated him all of his life. Additionally, although he rose to the rank of vice president while Moses was alive, Walter had never shouldered any real responsibility up to that point. Known more as a rich young "man about town," his youthful lifestyle resembled the wealthy young heirs of today who have a seemingly endless supply of money and time at their disposal (e.g., Paris and Nicki Hilton). However, the circumstances in Walter's personal life were beginning to change. He married his first wife, Veronica Dunkelman, in 1938 and the couple had two children during the following two years. With a family to support and an empire to manage, Walter felt ready to take on the mantle of the family business.⁶⁰

Unfortunately, the business that Walter inherited was deeply in debt. Walter spent 14-hour days running Triangle Publications from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* offices, trying desperately to salvage his father's empire and the family's reputation. Over the next several years, Annenberg sold off some family real estate as well as the wire services. He also began to implement the kind of editorial changes that he had only dreamed of while his father was in charge. For instance, he revamped *Click* magazine by hiring new staff (including Estelle Ellis, who later became promotion director at *Seventeen*) and giving them the directive to cover more serious stories.⁶¹

During the war period, celebrity-filled "screen" magazines, a previously popular genre, found themselves losing both readers and advertisers to women's

fashion and service magazines.⁶² The Condé Nast-owned magazine *Glamour of Hollywood* quickly responded to this trend by shifting its focus from fan to fashion, jettisoning the “*of Hollywood*” from its title.⁶³ At the suggestion of legendary *Vogue* art director, Dr. Mehemed Fehmy Agha, Annenberg decided to follow the cultural current and transform his own struggling fan magazine, *Stardom*, into a women’s fashion magazine.⁶⁴ Recognizing that a savvy editor-in-chief would be key to the success of this new endeavor, Annenberg consulted with the owner of Philadelphia’s The Blum Store, who sent Annenberg directly to *Mademoiselle*’s promotion director, Helen Valentine.⁶⁵

WHEN WALTER MET HELEN: AN OLD-FASHIONED ARRANGED MARRIAGE

Early in 1944, Walter Annenberg approached Helen Valentine, first through two emissaries, and then in person, with a business proposition involving a merger of their “resources.” He offered her the editorship of his failing movie magazine, *Stardom*, with the mandate to revitalize it as a women’s fashion magazine. As Valentine later described in her oral history, she wasn’t interested – at first:

[Dr. Agha] called me one day and said that there were two gentlemen who wanted to see me and they would like to come to my house some weekend and talk with me, they were in the publishing business, and so these two gentlemen came to see me one Saturday afternoon and we talked about everything under the sun and it was a sort of strange meeting, they didn’t really come to the point at all, you know. But when they left my husband said to me, “Well, you’re going to be offered a job any minute now,” [laugh] you know. Well, they were two people who were working with Walter Annenberg and what they wanted was for me to come and take over their magazine *Stardom*, which was a movie magazine, as you can imagine by the name, and turn it into a woman’s magazine. They said that Mr. Annenberg would like to meet me and talk to me about it, so we made an appointment and Mr.

Annenberg took me to lunch and he told me what he would like me to do and I said to him, "I'm not in the least bit interested. I do thank you for offering it to me, but I'm not interested. There's nothing in the world that you could offer me that would make me want to do it."⁶⁶

Ever the saleswoman, Helen took the opportunity to promote her own idea, one that she told *Newsweek* magazine had "simmered in her mind since she had watched her own daughter grow through the tricky teens."⁶⁷ Instead of a fashion magazine for adult women, she proposed a distinctly original concept: a service and fashion magazine written just for high school girls.⁶⁸

Although Valentine's idea for a teen service magazine may have first emerged as she raised a teen daughter, it reached fruition during World War II, a time in which citizenship and global awareness were at the forefront of many people's minds.

Valentine revealed the influence of this period on her inspiration when she recalled her sales pitch to Annenberg:

But I said, "I've got an idea cooking around in the back of my head if you're interested, I'd like to tell you about it," so he said, "Certainly." So I said, "Well, you know, I've been thinking a lot about the young people in this country today and one of the things that startled me was, I saw a picture of a meeting at the U.N. and it was a photograph taken before the doors opened and there was this long line of people outside and ninety percent of them were very young," and I said, "this is what started me thinking about the young people in this country. People have an idea that the only thing they're interested in is their next date, but it isn't so. They are really thinking about very important things and we ought to be thinking about them in those terms." And he looked at me, you know, [laughs] wide-eyed, and he said, "In other words, you think you'd like to do a magazine for them," and I said, "Absolutely, directed only to them." So he thought for a few minutes and he said, "Come and do it."⁶⁹

Of course, Helen can only relate her side of the story. Walter Annenberg's biographies, written many years later, tell a similar tale of this first meeting, but with

some minor variations. Although Annenberg credits Helen with being the first one to bring up the idea of a magazine for teenagers, he alludes to having at least considered such a venture on his own. Describing a walk that he took down Fifth Avenue earlier in 1944 with his sister, Enid Haupt, he remembers noting the window displays of junior-size clothing and remarking to Enid that “there isn’t a magazine for girls in that age group.”⁷⁰ Walter’s sisters and mother certainly believed that *Seventeen* was born of Annenberg’s business genius; they later described it as one of “Walter’s epiphanies.”⁷¹

AND “BABY” MAKES THREE

Written news reports of the period do seem to make one point clear: *Seventeen* was Helen’s baby – and certainly in the beginning, Annenberg acknowledged her primary role in its birth. An article about the magazine’s debut in *Tide*, an advertising and retail industry publication, stated:

For getting the *Seventeen* idea across, Annenberg and his general manager, Kenneth M. Friede, give all the credit to Mrs. Valentine who, though 51 and a grandmother, is as vivacious as the typical *Seventeen* reader. Mrs. Valentine agreed to take over on one condition: that the publication be edited as a service magazine to meet the needs of teen-age girls.⁷²

Indeed, *Seventeen* quickly became so much a part of Helen’s life that specific references to it as her “baby” abounded in multiple venues, including in media reports,⁷³ in the magazine itself,⁷⁴ and in the magazine’s promotional literature.⁷⁵ By giving the magazine such a powerfully evocative term of endearment, Helen signified the role that she was taking on for herself: that of a nurturing, life-giving maternal figure. Overseeing the creation and development of this magazine was not just a job

for her; it was a mission.

Helen christened the magazine *Seventeen* upon the suggestion of a friend.⁷⁶ She loved the name's simplicity, and its representation of "the age when a girl is no longer a child, yet isn't quite a woman" – her target readership.⁷⁷ In order to avoid any copyright infringement, Annenberg contacted writer Booth Tarkington, author of the popular 1916 coming-of-age novel, *Seventeen*, to formally request his consent. Tarkington gave his okay and his novel's namesake his blessing.⁷⁸

Both Annenberg and Valentine had aspirations and expectations for *Seventeen* and for its teen readership. However, while their goals were somewhat similar, their visions were informed by different concerns and driven by different core values. For Walter, the ultimate goal was respect – for himself, his family's reputation, his company, and his magazine.⁷⁹ Almost everything that Walter did as an adult and as a businessman was shaped by his relationship with his parents, particularly his father. After Moses's death, Annenberg placed all his energies into recouping his family's reputation, both personally and professionally. The younger Annenberg had always differed philosophically with his father's publishing policy of reaching for the "lowest common denominator."⁸⁰ Once in charge, Walter began to shift Triangle's business strategy from quantity-amassing to quality-assurance. In the case of *Seventeen*, this translated into Walter's desire to be affiliated with a respectable publication. He gave editor Helen Valentine two overarching editorial mandates: that the magazine be "sensible" and "wholesome." Although he took a hands-off approach, especially during the early years of Valentine's tenure as editor, Annenberg felt strongly enough

about this issue that he gave her some very specific directives about the kind of copy that he did *not* consider wholesome. For example, according to his biographies, he forbid the use of the word, “pimple,” in any article headlines, and restricted advertising that he deemed age-inappropriate – for instance, alcohol, cigarettes, and hotels.⁸¹

Walter hoped that the wholesome copy would set him apart from his father and return his family's lost honor. Although *Seventeen* was intended primarily for teen consumption, Walter viewed it much more broadly, as a vehicle for respect. Annenberg desired respect on several levels, wanting 1) Philadelphia to respect the Annenberg name; 2) the publishing community to respect Triangle Publishing; 3) advertisers to respect *Seventeen's* selling power; 4) teen girls to respect their parents; and 5) mothers to respect his magazine's proper, parental advice.⁸² In regard to the latter, he did find immediate success in garnering the respect of his own mother who, after the first issue of *Seventeen* hit the newsstands, sent a note that read: “My sweetheart Boy, I am so very proud of you my dear because you do use your head.”⁸³

Like Walter, Helen Valentine was also motivated by a concern for respect, but as it related to at least two different constituencies – the reader and her staff. First and foremost, she was determined to create a service magazine that respected the young woman reader as a “whole human being.”⁸⁴ Helen's respect for young women manifested itself in the text through an editorial tone that didn't talk down to the reader.⁸⁵ As she had remarked in the past, teenage girls were *not* children, and they should be treated with the kind of respect that goes with that kind of maturity. As

Helen reportedly told Walter in the initial stages of their negotiations:

There's room today for a publication aimed at teen-agers. They've been neglected by the established fashion publications. Everyone treats them as though they were silly, swooning bobby soxers. I think they're young adults and should be treated accordingly.⁸⁶

As *Seventeen's* editor-in-chief, Valentine drew on her previous experiences in publishing, particularly her stint as promotion director at *Mademoiselle*, where she learned first-hand how to produce a women's magazine that was both fashion-conscious and thought-provoking. Importing these lessons to *Seventeen*, she made sure that every issue contained "weighty reading" on serious issues.⁸⁷ For example, Helen recognized that her readership was quickly approaching voting age and believed that they needed the kind of information that would allow them to make educated decisions as voters and citizens.⁸⁸ As Estelle Ellis, *Seventeen's* promotion director, explains, Valentine's editorial policy was driven by this vision of teens:

Not just as consumers but as citizens of tomorrow ... of what their rights were and what their needs were. So we were, we were doing articles that responded to their emotional needs as adolescents trying to separate themselves from their family at a time when they're growing up and maturing but also, who are they going to be and what must they know in the way of culture, [small sigh] government, legislation, the war, Dumbarton Oaks, all of that.⁸⁹

Helen also wanted to introduce her young readership to high culture, such as great art and music. She believed that their artistic sensibilities had not yet been jaded by crass commercial culture and that they could still be "serious responders to music and art."⁹⁰ This respect for art and the artistic education of her readership led Valentine to adorn the magazine with the work of talented artists and photographers

such as Ben Shahn and Francesco Scavullo. In late 1947, she would hire graphic design artist Cipe Pineles as Art Director at *Seventeen*, a move that would bring even more artistic acclaim to the magazine – as well as a life-long friend and confidante to Valentine and Ellis.

Finally, Helen's respect extended from the reader to her staff. Her personnel policies granted *Seventeen's* editors considerable autonomy within their own areas. She also publicly and generously bestowed praise on her staff in recognition of their abilities, efforts, and achievements.⁹¹ Her staff, in turn, rewarded Helen with the kind of affection and respect usually reserved for loved ones.⁹² Promotion Director Estelle Ellis describes Helen's special maternal mentoring nature:

[Helen] was the whole person. First of all, in a time where many women who were achieving were barracudas, she was a gentle, loving, kind, quality human being and nourished the young people who worked with her. Number one. Number two, she was married, she had her own children. She made it possible for me to think that you could do both and she did do both and she encouraged me and she was there when my first child was born. My husband called her before he called my mother and she held his hand during the very difficult first pregnancy that I had. So this was a very uncommon lady for her times.⁹³

IT TAKES A VILLAGE...

As *Seventeen* developed from an abstract idea to a material reality, it became both a business and a workplace, inhabited and managed by flesh-and-blood people whose real lives included life histories and events, families and friends, personal philosophies and political agendas, and who brought all these characteristics, experiences, and personal idiosyncrasies to the work of raising Baby.

Despite the fact that he was 15-years her junior, Walter Annenberg clearly

saw himself as “Father” to Helen Valentine’s “Mother”; for example, he signed one letter to Helen as “Old Dad.”⁹⁴ And in some ways, the parameters of their early business relationship mirrored that of a “traditional” family, in which the father works outside of the home, and the mother within. Walter Annenberg oversaw the business of *Seventeen* from Triangle’s offices in Philadelphia, leaving most of the actual hands-on work of magazine-making to the mostly women staffers onsite. Communication between Annenberg and Valentine took place via telephone, mail, and periodic lunch meetings at Annenberg’s offices in Philadelphia.⁹⁵ Annenberg’s visits to *Seventeen* during these early years were rare; some former staffers report never having spied him on the premises.⁹⁶

Serving directly under Walter Annenberg on the business side of the magazine was Kenneth Friede, formerly the General Manager of *Stardom*, who retained this position at *Seventeen*. In a workplace where nepotism wasn’t discouraged (several relatives of principle staffers found employment opportunities at *Seventeen*),⁹⁷ Friede was not just a Triangle company man; he was an Annenberg family man. First brought into the family business by Moses Annenberg upon his marriage to Walter’s sister Evelyn, Friede remained an employee and close associate of Walter Annenberg even after he and Evelyn divorced.⁹⁸ As General Manager at *Seventeen*, Friede operated informally as the magazine’s publisher,⁹⁹ the most powerful business position at a magazine. Friede worked out of Triangle’s New York City offices, making himself available to the daily needs of the magazine. Estelle Ellis remembers Friede as being a kind and benevolent man who, despite his powerful position in “the

barracuda world of publishing,” remained “very responsive to the young staffers.”¹⁰⁰

Helen Valentine, as editor-in-chief, headed the editorial side of the magazine, overseeing the workplace of *Seventeen*. She reported directly to Walter Annenberg (or Kenneth Friede, in Annenberg’s stead). The magazine’s true creative leader, Valentine had to operate in both the abstract and the material, serving as *Seventeen*’s primary visionary and hands-on manager. As its leader, her mandate was to communicate her vision for the magazine to the staff; as the “boss,” her mandate was to make sure that her staff successfully communicated that vision to the readership. In order to do that, she had to recognize, hire, and nurture the most talented of staff.¹⁰¹

In the world of magazine publishing, the editor-in-chief’s right-hand (wo)man is either the managing editor or the executive editor – the difference between the two positions being largely semantic. Informally, the position of “managing editor” seems to carry more authoritative/authoritarian connotations than the term “executive editor.”¹⁰² However, both position-holders operate as the closest assistants to the editor-in-chief, making sure that her mandates get carried out.¹⁰³ At different times in Helen Valentine’s reign, she either had a managing editor *or* an executive editor, and for brief period, she had both. Charlotte Ware originally held the position of managing editor, later sharing power with executive editor Alice Thompson, Helen Valentine’s former mentoree, best friend, and on-again, off-again nemesis. Soon thereafter, however, Ware found herself replaced completely by Thompson.

For the position that Valentine herself held at *Mademoiselle*, promotion

director, Helen hired 25-year old Estelle Ellis.¹⁰⁴ Estelle was among the youngest of *Seventeen's* staffers, less than four years out of college and newly married to Samuel Rubinstein. Estelle's job as promotion director at *Seventeen* was among the magazine's most important positions, involving the development of a sales campaign for the magazine. Hired in part because of her youth, Ellis's mission was to define and communicate *Seventeen* and the teenage market to business. To this end, Ellis created the magazine's prototypical teen-age girl, named her "Teena," and introduced her as an embodied entity to the business community."¹⁰⁵

Other important original *Seventeen* staffers of note were art director, Jan Balet, a recent immigrant to America who left Germany in protest of Hitler's regime¹⁰⁶; beauty editor Irma Phorylles, a 29-year-old single who wrote witty copy that often reminded the reader of the love-connection between beauty and romance; and fashion editor, Eleanor Hillebrand, a 27-year-old newlywed (a/k/a "Mrs. Bruce") whose duties ran the gamut, from shopping for and choosing the featured clothing, to hiring the models and overseeing fashion shoots. One of Hillebrand's most important discoveries was *Seventeen's* photographer Francesco Scavullo. Although Scavullo eventually grew into an iconic talent in the fashion magazine industry, in 1944 he was just 23-year-old "Frank," happy to be working his first real gig shooting covers and photo spreads at *Seventeen*. Much like the "Cosmo-girls" that he would someday famously photograph for Helen Gurley Brown's *Cosmopolitan* covers, the "Teenases" who adorned his *Seventeen* covers came to visually represent the "face" of both the magazine and its teen-age girl ideal.

Finally, another important – and surprising – member of the early *Seventeen* family was 39-year-old Alice Dickey Thompson Beaton,¹⁰⁷ Helen Valentine's former friend and co-author, the assistant at *Vogue* who had worked her way into her mentor's job, leaving her mentor temporarily out of work. That Helen hired Alice after previously suffering at her hands exemplified Helen's capacity for forgiveness and perhaps her almost childlike naïveté in human relations. Valentine's adult daughter, Barbara Valentine Hertz and her daughter's husband, David Hertz, knowing all too well Helen's painful history with Alice, were "appalled" to learn that Helen had hired "a woman who had stabbed her in the back."¹⁰⁸ But that she did. And it was a decision that would come back to haunt her.

However, when Helen hired Alice to work at *Seventeen*, Alice was again in need of help, having fallen from grace at Condé Nast. For a time she had done well, serving as editor at *Vogue Pattern Book* from 1937-1939. In 1939, publisher Nast revamped *Vogue Pattern Book* as a mainstream women's magazine, which he named *Glamour of Hollywood*.¹⁰⁹ Thompson retained her position as editor-in-chief at the new magazine, a hybrid mix of fan rag and fashion mag. Two years into publication, however, Nast decided to renovate again, desiring to create a more upscale and traditional fashion magazine for young women that could compete head-to-head with *Mademoiselle* (where Helen Valentine had landed a job as promotions director). Nast discarded the "*of Hollywood*" from the title, as well as editor-in-chief Alice Thompson. Although Thompson bounced back with a two year stint as women's editor at *Look* magazine, she was laboring as a copywriter at an New York City ad

agency when Helen Valentine hired her as a writer for *Seventeen*.¹¹⁰

Although Alice's name didn't appear on the masthead during the first year, she played an integral part in constructing the early editorial discourse of *Seventeen*, penning the monthly column "For Seniors Only," other articles, and even the occasional fiction story. A Quaker, Thompson shared Valentine's progressive politics, especially in regard to issues of racial, ethnic, and religious equality, and her articles frequently addressed those topics with the fire and brimstone fervor of a proselytizing preacher. Alice wrote interchangeably under the bylines of "Alice Thompson" and "Alice Beaton"; the former, her married name by her first husband, E. Austin Thompson, the latter, her married name by her second husband, John Beaton. Generally speaking, though, she used "Alice Thompson" professionally.

Like many of *Seventeen's* other staffers, Alice balanced her work life with a full home life – one that included her second husband and two children from her first marriage: teenage son Ted Thompson (who would himself become a *Seventeen* contributor) and younger daughter Judith Anne Thompson. Even before Thompson officially joined the staff as an editor, her full work and family life merited highlighting in a short biographical paragraph for *Seventeen's* September 1945 birthday issue, which explained that Alice:

leads the life of Reilly ... the hard-working branch of the family. A cracker-jack copy writer, she can't think in a room done in blue. Happily married, she has a daughter who keeps the house swarming with Teenas, and Alice says it is a mystery to her why anybody ever calls teen-agers "difficult."¹¹¹

These were some of the people whose labor shaped *Seventeen* during its very

important developmental period. Together they created the first teen magazine and developed a previously unformed teen girl ideal, embodied within the magazine's promotional literature as "Teena." *Seventeen* and Teena were born in their minds, put to paper through their work, and then introduced to a nation. The family included a collection of people from all walks of life – from the manor-born to the foreign-born. By and large, however, it was a workplace run almost exclusively by women, most of them relatively young, many of them recent immigrants, very few of them people of color.¹¹² Still, if the egalitarian nature of a workplace can be measured by the ability of its least experienced to move up the ranks, then Helen Valentine's *Seventeen* was such a place. As Alberta Eiseman, a young Jewish immigrant from Italy who worked as an editorial assistant, reminisces:

We were a very unsophisticated lot but we did a lot of work and it was a very good place to be for somebody young and anxious to write because they didn't pay much, heaven knows, but they did let you write. If you had any desire and talent, they'd let you write and after a while they'd give you a byline. And that's what you really wanted.¹¹³

Ingrid Loewenstein Sladkus, another editorial assistant (and recent immigrant from Czechoslovakia), concurs:

Oh, it was delightful, it really was, I mean there were little intrigues here and there that got more and more interesting as I got older, but it was a wonderful place and everyone was very welcoming to me. I was just a kid from high school, you know, but they made me feel like I was gonna have a job to do and they were very nice and the editors were always very ... I don't how I can describe them, but they were certainly willing to be of help and to get me going in my career.¹¹⁴

Sladkus also remembers Helen Valentine's remarkable accessibility to all her employees, regardless of their position. Looking back after decades of working for

other media companies, including the *San Francisco Examiner*, Ingrid is even more struck by it, saying:

I think it's remarkable that Helen Valentine would take an interest in a 17-year-old like I was and actually have me come for the interview and actually give me a job [...]. She was always friendly, very busy but always had a minute to chat with me or something like that and everybody liked her very much.¹¹⁵

ANNOUNCING BABY'S BIRTH

Of course, as is the case with the birth of most human babies, Annenberg and Valentine were eager to share the news of their impending newborn – and to alert all interested parties of the economic opportunity at hand. The first announcement appeared in the fashion bible, *Women's Wear Daily*, on August 9, 1944. The full page ad featured a picture of a smiling young woman of teen-age with the headline: “17 – The New Magazine That's Needed Now!” The text proclaimed:

Teens are the talk of the times. Department stores from coast to coast are opening (or expanding) Teen-Age Shops. Apparel manufacturers are making more imaginative and appealing teen-age fashions. Cosmetics houses are designing special teen-age lines. Movies and the theatre alternately laugh at or weep over this fascinating younger generation. Everywhere there is talk of the teens.

Now ... here comes a magazine dedicated to this vital group ... a medium tailored to fit their needs, their interests, their way of life. A gay, good taste, good humored magazine that talks straight – in the language of the intelligent young woman of today.

If you also talk their language...if you make, sell or promote anything they wear, use or buy ... better find out more about SEVENTEEN – it may prove to be your lucky number!”

Seventeen – the sweetest market ever sold.¹¹⁶

Just one week before Baby made her public debut, an article in the August 26,

1944 issue of *Business Week* magazine heralded her arrival in an article entitled, “New Teen-Age Magazine”:

Triangle Publications, Inc. will jump on the back-to-school bandwagon next week with the first issue of a new 15-cent monthly, *Seventeen*. The magazine will be edited specifically for teen-age girls by Helen Valentine, for five years promotional director of Street & Smith’s *Mademoiselle* – which commands readership from a somewhat older feminine group.

Paper allotment for *Seventeen* comes from Triangle’s now discontinued movie fan magazine, *Stardom*, but there the resemblance ends, say its editors. *Seventeen* will advise high school girls on fashions (in full color), beauty, movies, food, fun, and other teen-age interests. It also expects to advise advertisers on what it claims is a \$750,000,000 annual market among the country’s 6,000,000 high school girls [...].¹¹⁷

The business community may have been ignorant to the power and presence of the teen girl up until this point, but it was quick to take note of her when *Seventeen* made its splashy arrival. Two months after her “coming out,” *Newsweek* reported on *Seventeen*’s “electric” reverberations throughout business and culture, in an article entitled, “Bobby-Sock Forum”:

To publishing circles last week came a shocker from Walter H. Annenberg, 36, dark, stocky, and aggressive, who heads Triangle Publications, Inc. – the fabulous newspaper, racing sheet, and magazine domain built by his late father, Moses L. Annenberg.

With considerable fanfare, Annenberg announced that with the January issue he would bury *Click*, third largest picture magazine of the country, with a prospect of \$1,000,000 advertising revenue this year. Annenberg’s reason: He wanted to transfer the paper stock required for *Click*’s million-plus circulation to *Seventeen*, newest and biggest sensation of the prosperous Triangle family. Last summer, Annenberg looked over the Triangle magazines and found *Stardom* whose paper quota he felt could be put to better use. He buried it, and on Sept 1 launched *Seventeen*, an out-sized, thick and slick magazine beamed at the bobby-sock brigade.

The teen-agers’ response to this venture into a hitherto unexploited field –

their fashions , hobbies, etiquette, school problems, amusements, and behavior – was electric. The first issue, which featured a 45 photo double-page spread of Frank Sinatra, sold its press run of 400,000 copies and brought 500 letters from readers.¹¹⁸

CONCLUSION

Seventeen's immediate success in the marketplace alerted Walter Annenberg to the magazine's possible future significance. Thus, one month after *Seventeen* began publication, Annenberg put to paper the details of its origins in a letter on Triangle stationery, addressed to editor-in-chief Helen Valentine, with cc's to five other involved parties: "Mssrs. First, Friede, Oschay, McGivena, and Agha."

Annenberg's letter set out *Seventeen's* developmental trajectory as follows:

The magazine SEVENTEEN was born as a result of a series of decisions as to what to do with the none too successful screen magazine STARDOM. In the late fall of 1943, we determined to try and get some of the vast amount of fashion advertising which was going begging because of the magazine paper rationing problem. We had heard that such books as MADEMOISELLE, CHARM and GLAMOUR were turning down countless pages each issue, and the lure of going after some of this overflow business was understandable.

Accordingly, we requested our editors to set up a twenty page fashion section in STARDOM; these efforts after three issues did not prove fruitful.

Along about that time, Mr. Annenberg discussed the publication with Leo McGivena, one of the country's top publication promotional men, and McGivena suggested that Dr. M. F. Agha, one time art expert for the Condé Nast publications, be contacted. Dr. Agha, who now is an art consultant for several publications and many department stores, had a conversation with Mr. Annenberg, and thereupon Mr. Annenberg engaged Dr. Agha to take STARDOM under his wing. After a few weeks, Dr. Agha flatly told Mr. Annenberg that the combination of a motion picture book with a fashion section would not get any place; that it certainly would not attract fashion advertising. The Doctor took the position that others had tried this in the past, and had failed, and urged that we remain either a movie book, or go into a complete fashion publication. We were, of course, attracted to the logic in the enormous potential that a fashion book offered. After reaching a definite decision to move in this direction, Mr. Annenberg communicated with an

executive of The Blum Store, (a speciality shop) in Philadelphia, in whom he had a great deal of confidence. Mr. Annenberg asked this individual who in his opinion was the outstanding woman in the fashion magazine field with whom he had contact. The Blum Store executive readily answered, "If Helen Valentine, the promotional director of MADEMOISELLE is available, that's your woman." Whereupon, Mr. Annenberg requested Kenneth Friede, Triangle Publications executive, to contact Helen Valentine, and see if she would be interested in editing her own magazine; editing it with an absolutely free hand. After several conferences, Mr. Friede was able to report that Helen Valentine was receptive, and she was engaged to do the job.

Helen Valentine recommended a new name for the magazine, and urged that we consider the title SEVENTEEN, which was suggested to her by one of her intimate friends. Mrs. Valentine further insisted that the book be edited to the tastes of teen-age girls, a field that had practically no coverage. To this the Company agreed.

The proposed magazine met with instant favor among the prospective advertisers, and the many merchandise people in stores right across the country. The response of the public on the first two issues is certainly a compliment to the judgment of all those who had a hand in the book's creation.¹¹⁹

This letter, written and signed by Walter Annenberg just one month after *Seventeen's* debut, offers historical observers a contemporaneous account of the magazine's origins, unsullied by the fog of time, the vagaries of memory, and the eventual ascendancy of certain storytellers. It sets a reference point against which future stories about *Seventeen's* history, told by the different parties involved, can be considered and analyzed. This is important because different people's perceptions and reports of the same events and circumstances were not always congruent, and the passing of time only exacerbated these discrepancies. In addition, disparities of individual privilege would later influence whose narratives became part of the public history of *Seventeen's* origins.

But for now, by weaving together the observations of people who were there at the time, news reports of the day, and Annenberg's letter, we can produce a fairly representative tapestry of *Seventeen's* genesis. The main threads pop out in vivid color: Walter Annenberg wanted to make money and improve his family's reputation by revamping his fan magazine into a women's fashion magazine; he approached Helen Valentine, who suggested a different tack – that she edit a service magazine for teen-age girls; Annenberg agreed, Valentine did just that, and the result was the immediately successful *Seventeen* magazine. A marriage made in New York City produced a beautiful and profitable baby. And if this were a fairy tale, they would all live happily ever after.

But they didn't. And, if we look closely at the tapestry, we can see the muted undertones that hint at the future to come. As the two most important people to have "a hand in [*Seventeen's*] creation," Walter Annenberg and Helen Valentine may have appeared as co-creators, but this was never a marriage between equals. Annenberg benefitted from multiple privileges that ultimately placed him in a powerful position of authority over Valentine. First of all, long before Valentine entered his life, he was privileged by both class and gender – if not by ethnicity. As the only son amongst many daughters, he alone was bequeathed control of Triangle Publications, rewarded by his father's belief in "primogeniture" – the right of the eldest son to inherit a family's entire estate.

Perhaps not coincidentally, Annenberg ran Triangle and *Seventeen* as a patriarch, one who maintained the "final say" and whose decisions were final. Thus,

although he wrote in his letter that Valentine could “edit *Seventeen* with a free hand” and that she had “insisted that the book be edited to the taste of teen-age girls,” Valentine’s free hand and free will only operated insofar as it pleased Annenberg – a situation that later chapters will illuminate. Reduced to economic basics, Annenberg was the owner of *Seventeen* and Helen Valentine was merely his employee. In controlling *Seventeen*’s purse strings, Annenberg could afford to enforce his dictates. In the end, *Seventeen* may have been Valentine’s concept, but once in Annenberg’s employ, he “owned” the both of them.

CHAPTER 3

Seventeen at War: **Teena in the World of Opportunity**

seventeen says hello

It isn't everyone who can be born at the age of Seventeen ... but here we are, brand new, and yet – we're Seventeen in spirit.

SEVENTEEN is your magazine, High School Girls of America – all yours! It is interested only in you – and in everything that concerns, excites, annoys, pleases or perplexes you.

SEVENTEEN is interested in *how you dress*. We're not much on the tricky stuff, but we believe clothes must be right for you and the time, place and occasion for which you'll wear them.

We care about *how you feel and how you look*. Those two always go together. Keats said "Truth is Beauty." We have no quarrel with that – but for practical purposes health is beauty. With good health as a beginning, we hope to give you plenty of pointers on how to build a new you – which, if it doesn't knock 'em cold, at least will make people pleasantly aware of you as a person.

SEVENTEEN is interested in *what you do*. Are you a music fiend, a bookworm, a movie fan? Do you like art, history, poetry or humor? Do you squander your leisure, or do you consider time a precious commodity?

We're keenly interested in *what you think*. Are you so baffled by the confusions of reality that you take refuge in a world of your own? Or do you feel that the world is your oyster – just waiting to be opened and produce its pearl?

But – most important of all – **SEVENTEEN** is interested in *what you are* ... the kind of human being you are. Are you tense and ill-at-ease or comfortable and relaxed? Have you a chip on your shoulder or a smile on your lips? Are you interested only in yourself and your closest family and friends, or do you care what happens to people you'll never see?

You're going to have to run this show – so the sooner you start thinking about it, the better. In a world that is changing as quickly and profoundly as ours is, we hope to provide a clearing house for your ideas.

As a magazine, we shall discuss all the things you consider important – with plenty of help from you, please. Write us about anything or everything. Say you agree with **SEVENTEEN** or disagree violently, say we're tops, say we're terrible, say anything you please – but say it! [*Seventeen*, September 1944, 33 (original emphasis retained)]

Signed with a flourish in her distinctively dramatic script of standup-straight-at-attention letters, *Seventeen's* editor-in-chief Helen Valentine extended this welcome to the reader in the magazine's very first issue. Valentine's letter, however, was much more than a simple "hello." Using carefully chosen words and literary devices, she discursively constructed the tone and editorial philosophy of the fledgling magazine.¹ In addition, her letter, which she would later refer to as the *Seventeen's* credo, set the stage for the readership, guiding their expectations and preparing them for what awaited them in the pages of *their* new magazine.

In each paragraph, Helen summarized and informally ranked the magazine's basic core values, demarcating its topical parameters. Using **bolding** and *italics*, Valentine highlighted the most relevant concepts and points. The bolded and italicized words indicate a relationship between two primary participants: **SEVENTEEN** and "*you*" – specifically identified as "High School Girls of America." In addition, the type case visually depicts the role and/or position of each participant in this budding relationship. As signified by the use of all capital letters, *SEVENTEEN* asserts its authority over the reader, who is represented in all lower-case lettering ("*you*"). Whether or not the teen reader actually decoded the text in this way, accepting the magazine's "capitalized" authority, the original encoding seems to

visually depict an unequal relationship.²

Valentine's letter also foreshadowed the overall tone of the magazine. An editor's own voice and personality inevitably become an integral part of a magazine's tone – and this is particularly true when the magazine is the editor's own creation, as was the case for Valentine and *Seventeen*.³ Helen's use of nurturing words such as “care” and “interested” communicated to the reader that *Seventeen*'s authority emerged out of a benevolent and abiding concern for (and about) the teenage girl. The letter expressed her desire that this burgeoning relationship *not* be like that between a dictator and the dictated – or, perhaps more saliently to the reader, between a parent and a child or a mother and a daughter. Instead, Valentine set the conversational tone for the entire magazine by speaking to the reader in a way that closely replicated the dialogue between an older sister and younger sister or favorite aunt and favored niece.⁴

Valentine, through her letter, invited the reader into a quasi-personal relationship, however, she was also negotiating a business relationship. Convincing the teen reader to “buy” into this relationship (and magazine) would require the reader's voluntary submission (and – hopefully – subscription). To facilitate this end, Valentine needed to persuade the reader that *Seventeen* cared about her, that it had something to offer her, and that the relationship – while unequal – would be respectful and *reciprocal*. Thus, Valentine ended her letter with an appeal for the readership's input – on “anything or everything.” Indeed, unlike the typical parent/child relationship, she even gave her permission for the reader to “disagree

violently” or “say we’re terrible.”⁵

Valentine listed the magazine’s areas of interest in the body of the letter, effectively setting out *Seventeen*’s topical parameters. The subjects, highlighted in bolded lettering, all revolve around the teen girl – body and soul. It is interesting to note that, despite Valentine’s insistence on creating a young woman’s *service* magazine, the first two interests listed are the standard fashion fare of “how you dress” and “how you feel and look.” Perhaps not coincidentally, these concerns are the most closely tied to the interests of advertisers (i.e., the clothing and cosmetic industries), the necessary investors for a magazine’s economic success. However, in the following paragraphs, Valentine moved away from bodily concerns and toward “person” concerns – subjects to which she would give considerable editorial coverage and which were far less advertiser-oriented.

In a way, Valentine’s third listed interest in “what you do” offered a bridge between the body and the mind of the reader – as well as between advertiser and editorial interests. Leisure activities such as listening to music, reading a book, and watching a film are both physical *and* cerebral, utilizing bodies and minds. They also often involve a “buying opportunity” – for an album, radio, novel, theater ticket. It is not surprising, then, that the editorial and advertising content in *Seventeen* routinely encouraged and advised the reader in the consumption of these products.

The last two interests that Valentine tackled, “what you think” and “what you are,” were the closest to her oft-expressed editorial vision and personal concern for the teen reader as a “whole human being.” These interests pertained to the self in

relation to society, and shifted attention from the individual to the social, whether represented as interpersonal relationships, community concerns, national responsibilities, or global citizenship. *Seventeen* would offer a tremendous amount of advice on these topics, especially during its first few years of publication. The magazine's coverage of these subjects was, in fact, the material manifestation of the inspiration that Helen spoke of feeling when she recounted looking at a picture of teenagers at the United Nations. As she explained to the reader, "what you think" and "what you are" had to do with the future of the world and the world's future citizens – her readers. Valentine was keenly aware of teens as adults-in-training and through this letter of introduction, she offered *Seventeen* to the reader as both training ground and personal trainer.

A 1-1/4 page black and white photograph accompanied Valentine's letter, symbolically illustrating the relationship between the magazine and its readership [see Figure 2, Appendix B]. The focal point of the photograph is a birthday cake with icing that reads, "Happy Birthday Seventeen." Three brunette women of varying ages encircle the cake, each classically pretty by white Western European standards. The woman in the middle leans forward and blows out the candles. Judging by her sophisticated coiffure, dark lipstick, and deeply-hollowed cheeks, she appears to be well into mature adulthood. As the representative of *Seventeen*, she commands center-stage and takes the most active role in the portrait.⁶ The two younger women who flank her represent *Seventeen's* readership. They smile and look on, but they leave the work of blowing out the candles to their older counterpart. The young

woman to the left appears to be in her late teens and she stands closest to the adult. To the right, leaning forward toward the cake and into the picture, the youngest girl, apparently in her early teens, wears a pageboy haircut and a ruffled frock – symbols of youth. Of the three women, she stands farthest from the cake, but her body communicates her desire to participate in the festivities. Just as with the letter it accompanied, this picture gave the reader a representation of herself and *Seventeen* in relation to each other. It communicated that whether she was 13, 17, or somewhere in-between (the magazine's targeted age-range), she was invited to join in the fun.

HEY, LOOK ME OVER!

In this section, I explore the first thirteen issues (from birth to first birthday) of *Seventeen*, specifically investigating how Valentine's proclaimed concerns for the reader manifested themselves in the magazine text. These first issues are of particular interest for several reasons. First of all, they offer a look *Seventeen's* "baby pictures" – a peek into a grande dame's infancy. Second, it was during these early years that Walter Annenberg allowed Valentine and her staff relative "free-rein" over the creative direction of the magazine, so that these first issues offer a less sullied representation of Valentine's vision. Finally, they were created during and shaped by a significant global and national cultural event – World War II.

My examination begins at the place where most (if not all) readers begin their magazine perusal: the cover(s). I then venture inside the pages in order to overview *Seventeen's* editorial discourse during this important historical period.

You Can Tell A Book By Its Cover

What can the covers of the first thirteen issues of *Seventeen* tell us about the magazine? Or, as John Berger might ask, what do we “see” through their “windows”?⁷ An initial observation is that they differ dramatically from the teen and women’s magazine covers of today. First of all, measuring 10 3/8" by 13 1/8", the magazine as a material object takes up more physical and visual space than contemporary magazines. And in this case, size *does* matter. A large magazine, the size of early *Seventeen*, was rather unwieldy and meant to be examined in one place – a bed, table, or even the floor – and perhaps by more than one person at a time. Today’s smaller magazines, on the other hand, are portable – meant to be toted about in an individual’s purse or backpack and examined between other daily tasks and errands.⁸

The cover portraits and copylines that adorned early *Seventeen* were spare and simple. *Seventeen* gave its young photographer Francesco Scavullo considerable artistic control over the cover models and their “look,” and he was instrumental in crafting and portraying both the face of *Seventeen* and of the teen girl ideal. Except for a few exceptions, each cover featured a young woman who, in contrast to the cover models of today, looked her “teen” age. While the models were classically pretty by Euro-American standards, it was in a (albeit upper-class) “real girl” way. Their skin shone with health, fair as Snow White’s and unblemished by the acne that *Seventeen*’s readers might battle. Their hair – ranging in shades from golden blond to auburn to dark brown (no platinum blond or black-haired beauties among them) –

was uniformly shoulder-length, smooth as silk, and stick straight (save for a bit of a flip at the bottom, courtesy of a well-placed curler). In particular, Scavullo railed against the home-perm curls embraced by the populace and marketed in the magazine's advertising pages.⁹ As long as he crafted *Seventeen's* covers, no chemically-produced pedestrian curls marred his elegant production.

The cover portraits were usually framed by sparse text: *seventeen* (in lower-case lettering) scrolled across the top of the magazine and punctuated by a tiny circular "MLA." As the symbol of Triangle Publication's copyright, the MLA also served as a link to the past and to the company's original creator, Moses Louis Annenberg, father of Walter. The issue date and cost (15 cents) appeared directly beneath the title. For the first seven *Seventeen* covers, a singular running copyline at the bottom of the page listed: "Young fashions & beauty, movies & music, ideas & people" but disappeared thereafter [See Figure 3, Appendix B].

This simple cover presentation followed the trend of the period. Other comparable women's fashion magazines, including *Vogue*, *Mademoiselle*, *Glamour*, *Charm*, and *Harper's Bazaar*, sported covers with almost identical layouts. *Calling All Girls*, *Seventeen's* closest periodical relation in terms of an adolescent readership, had a similar layout but differed in other significant ways. Like *Seventeen*, its cover featured the requisite title, cover girl, and caption. On the other hand, *Calling All Girls* was a physically smaller magazine, featuring real girls, as opposed to professional models, who appeared both younger and more middle class than *Seventeen's* polished cover girls (think Midwestern wholesomeness versus Park

Avenue sophistication). In addition, as *Calling All Girls*' caption revealed, the magazine contained primarily "comics" and "stories," interspersed with articles about "fashions," "things to do," "good looks," and "movies." Thus, in comparison to *Seventeen*, *Calling All Girls* identified itself as more preteen than teen, more comic book than either fashion bible or service manual.

Several of *Seventeen*'s first year issues featured overarching themes, whether formally labeled (as with April's "Girl Meets Boy" issue) or informally constructed (as with the holiday or seasonally influenced issues) and their covers often hinted at the magazine's themed content. Thematic covers included November's "Thanksgiving" issue, December's "Christmas" issue, April's "Girl Meets Boy" issue, August's "Back to School" issue, and September's "Birthday" issue. Sometimes thematic covers departed from usual cover norms. For instance, the Birthday issue included a special cover-line, noting: "NOW WE ARE ONE YEAR OLD - THANKS TO YOU" while the "Girl Meets Boy" issue shook things up by inviting a boy to join the cover girl in a friendly game of "cat's cradle" (a string game popular at the time).

In addition, signs of World War II often appeared on *Seventeen*'s early covers. The cover of the June 1945 issue, for example, features a patriotic theme and completely departs from the normal layout design. No human person appears on this cover. Instead, a letter signed by WWII American military leaders, Generals Arnold, Eisenhower, MacArthur, and Marshall, and Admirals King, Leahy, and Nimitz, is set against a background of deep red, framed on one side by a wreath of starred-and-

striped leaves. The letter implores the readership to support their troops and ensure “a new world of freedom and peace” by investing in War Bonds “to the fullest extent of your capacity.” The inside cover acknowledgment, which usually gave buying information for clothing featured on the cover, explains the letter as “a direct appeal from the men who are leading our forces to victory. For their supreme efforts, they ask only our fullest and most realistic support.”¹⁰ Although this cover and acknowledgment depart somewhat radically from the usual fashion-focused norm, they still involved the appeal to consumption (of War Bonds) – in this case, an overt recommendation from both government and editorial staff, “clothed” in patriotism instead of fabric. In effect, they asked teen girls to consume in the name of citizenship – to be, according to the typology created by historian Lizabeth Cohen, good “Citizen Consumers.”¹¹

The cover of the February 1945 issue also addressed the ongoing war. It features a young woman, the first dark brunette cover model (perhaps darker hair better signaling serious subject matter), wearing a blue sweater and matching beret and carrying a Red Cross flag. Behind her, muted images of Red Cross ambulances race across the backdrop. The cover acknowledgment on the title page describes the picture:

The Red Cross, symbol of all that's good in civilization. The banner bearer wears a Vic-Deb fur felt beret designed for SEVENTEEN by Sally Victor, \$6.95. The wool sweater has an elegant roll collar and enormous charm, \$10.95. The Teen Shop, B. Altman & Co.¹²

Seventeen again used the cover and acknowledgment to visually and

discursively meld the concepts of consumption and citizenship into a holistic entity; this time, however, the ideal was depicted through *Seventeen*'s lens of exemplary consumer citizenship. From this standpoint, it was possible (indeed admirable) to be both stylish and patriotic – to wear one's new clothes while doing good works. During the war era in particular, *Seventeen* would heavily promote these two ideologies – consumption and citizenship – to their readership.

Although *Seventeen* regularly published articles on the serious issues of war and citizenship, covers that reflected these topics were not the norm. Instead, covers more commonly represented youthful beauty “in season.” The November and December covers, which signaled seasonal holidays through the use of colors and props, offer excellent illustrations of this cover schema. The cover of the December issue tells a very familiar and evocative holiday tale. Contrasted against the dark green cover background, a young woman wearing a snow-white gown sits holding a small white dog, a red bow crowning its head. The dog's red bow and the model's red bow mouth, together with the tree-green backdrop and the pure-white dress, colorfully illustrate “Christmas,” no words necessary.

The November “Thanksgiving” issue also used color and props to signal the holiday. The cover girl, wearing a brown dress that sets off her deep brown eyes, stands in front of a table spread with nuts, grapes, oranges, apples, and gourds – symbolic fruits of the thanksgiving season. A closer look, however, yields a somewhat subversive surprise. The picture includes three main focal points: the cover model, whose gold charm bracelet signals her personal/family affluence; the

background banquet spread, signaling comfort and domestic affluence; and a framed picture that hangs above the banquet table. Although the picture is blurred, the artistic folk style of the picture and the deep ebony flesh tone of the people portrayed (contrasted against the stark white of their attire), strongly suggests that they are African-American. Whether consciously or not, photographer Francesco Scavullo subtly inserted irony into the *Seventeen* cover. According to family sources, Valentine had wanted to include African American girls as models, but Walter Annenberg refused her request.¹³ Perhaps Scavullo shared Valentine's progressive politics and creative vision of a racially integrated *Seventeen*.¹⁴ Whether intentional or not, however, the juxtaposition of the three main visual elements of this cover – the affluent white woman, the overflowing banquet, and the rustic portrait of a group of black folk – creates at the very least a dissonant chord, and at the very most a political statement about social inequality. It was just another indicator that this was not your average fashion magazine.

Mapping the Text

Whether spotlighting beauty, fashion, citizenship, relationships, holidays, war, milestone magazine birthdays, or any combination thereof, *Seventeen*'s covers generally reflected the content of the pages to follow. And the number of those pages increased significantly from birth to first birthday. The first issue weighed in at a mere 88 pages; 12 issues later, the magazine had almost doubled in size to 168 pages. *Seventeen* bragged in a promotional document from 1945, "Although the baby is only one year old, she certainly is big for her age!"¹⁵

Magazines generally categorize editorial content in a Table of Contents, which represents a kind of discursive mapping of the text. During *Seventeen's* first year, the Table of Contents listed articles under the topical categories of, from top to bottom, "What You Wear," "How You Look" (expanded to "How You Feel and Look" in June 1945), "Getting Along in the World," "Your Mind," and "Having Fun." In January 1945, they add "Fiction" to these categories.

The value that *Seventeen* put on each of Valentine's original reader concerns (fashion, beauty and health, self-in-relation to others, the life of the mind, and activities) can be measured to some extent by the magazine's allotment of page space to articles under each of the five original categories in the Table of Contents. In the first year, *Seventeen* devoted the majority of its editorial space – in almost equal proportion – to articles about "Having Fun," "Your Mind," "What You Wear," and "Getting Along in the World. " Articles about "How You Feel and Look" as well as "Fiction" stories, on the other hand, made up a tiny minority of the total discourse [See Table 1, Appendix C].¹⁶

The distribution of features in early *Seventeen* reflects a magazine that valued service and citizenship as much as fashion and fun. In fact, the discursive balance between service and fashion could shift toward the former on occasion, especially in *Seventeen's* special themed issues. For example, the magazine devoted 35% of the editorial space in the July, 1945 "Your America" issue to articles that fell under the rubric of "Your Mind" – most of them about politics and patriotism. Conversely, "What You Wear" features in this issue fell to just 15% of the total editorial content.

The April, 1945 "Girl Meets Boy Issue," offers a similar example of the influence of a special issue on editorial content. This issue differed from the norm in that it was written for the consumption of both girl and boy readers. As the magazine explained in its previous month's issue, "The April issue of SEVENTEEN will be coeducational. The male sex is, after all, as important as the female, so members of both groups are cordially invited to share it."¹⁷ For this issue, the editors reduced features on "What You Wear" to just 15%, and expanded the features about "Getting Along in the World" to 31%. Contrary to what might have been expected, this initial "Girl Meets Boy" issue acknowledged but downplayed romance, instead stressing the need for young men and women to learn about each as human beings and "fellow" citizens. Helen Valentine, writing in her article, "The World Is Yours" explained the reasoning behind the special "Girl Meets Boy" issue, and directed the readers to specific articles of note:

This Girl-Meets-Boy Issue of SEVENTEEN tries to help you over a few of the hurdles [...] We believe that friendships between boys and girls are not only possible but that these friendships must form a vital part of everyone's life (Are Boys People?, Page 96). We believe that necking is a subject which must be honestly understood and frankly discussed (Star Dust or Indigestion?, Page 97). We believe that boys and girls need to respect and protect their bodies (The Time Is Now, Pages 74 and 75). We believe that the old division between woman's work and man's is beginning to crumble and should disintegrate further (Why Don't Parents Grow Up? ... Jobs Have No Gender, Page 18; also If He Could Only Cook..., Pages 76 and 77). We think that boys and girls should not concentrate too closely on their own tiny group but should think of themselves in relation to all people (A Code for Everyday Living, Pages 64 and 65).¹⁸

While fashion coverage dropped in some special issues, it's not surprising that the August, 1945 "Back to School" issue saw the highest proportion, at 26%. Still,

this same issue included an equal proportion of articles about “Your Mind.” Thus, in the early issues of the magazine, the appeal to fashion never overshadowed or took precedence over the appeal to service.¹⁹ In the following sections, I describe and analyze the features and articles that made up the discourse of each of the categories of *Seventeen’s* Table of Contents. These topical categories also served to delineate and illustrate the magazine’s conceptualization of the areas of an ideal teen girl’s life – her body, world, mind, and leisure.

What You Wear

“What You Wear” mostly featured photographic and/or illustrated fashion spreads of clothing or accessories, often linked to seasons, holidays, or events/venues (school, dates, Church, dances, work). As a whole, they offered visual documentation of the teen girl fashion trends of the war period, a time during which dresses and skirted suits were the norm, but pants suits and short sets were also common. The popularity of pants and shorts represented the influence of war on fashion; apparently, while the “boys” were away, the girls did play – in their (masculine) clothes! *Seventeen* often featured suits and lauded them for their menswear-inspired detailing, tailoring and fabric. The magazine even counseled readers to raid the closets of their male relatives, as in the fashion spread, “Daddy, May I Borrow Your Tie?”²⁰ The July 1945 frontispiece took the menswear look even farther, sailing into a kind of gender-bending fashion fantasy. Picturing a young woman in “Pirate Pants,” the accompanying copy opined that “Lady pirates must have been done up so...with shirt and knee-high pants, girdled by a broad, swashbuckling

belt.²¹

The August 1945 issue of *Seventeen*, however, signaled a postwar shift in women's clothing, as fashion designers began to move away from the menswear look toward a very hyper-feminine silhouette.²² Apparently, once military men returned to America, women's call-to-duty went beyond returning to them their jobs, but also their comfy suits and pants. *Seventeen's* fashion feature, "Sweaters Come Into Their Own," heralded this shift, particularly the return of the "female form":

Up until lately a sweater simply hasn't been chic unless both you and your best friend could get into it simultaneously. It had to come within a quarter-inch of your knees; and if you had any waistline, you kept it a shameful secret. Well, the reprieve has come! We have had the Word that the female form is no longer among the missing. So come out from under that thing you've been tenting in, and see how exceedingly ornamental a sweater can be!"²³

No distinct line of demarcation separated the end of one fashion trend and the beginning of another; instead, as menswear-inspired apparel waned, hyper-feminine apparel waxed. For example, although the September 1945 issue of *Seventeen* was filled with that season's "new look" feminine clothing, it also included a fashion spread entitled "It's the Country Life for Me..." featuring a "menswear grey skirt," "wool slacks," and a "lady cowpuncher" in jodhpurs.²⁴

From its first issue, *Seventeen* enjoyed and profited from a close and reciprocal relationship with the newly emerging teen clothing industry. In fact, editor-in-chief Valentine was so devoted to the success of the teen specialty industry that she restricted *Seventeen's* fashion pages to teen-size clothing only. In addition, the magazine routinely published articles like "Are Their Skeletons in Your Closet?"

to promote the teen clothing industry to the readership – as well as *Seventeen's* own efforts on their behalf:

Until the last few years when high school shops began to crop up in department stores, there had actually been no place for you to buy your clothes. You had certainly left the children's department far behind, but you just as certainly weren't ready to buy your clothes in either the regular misses' departments or the small-sized women's shops. [...] [T]here didn't seem to be any alternative for you. Thank goodness there is now. And better still, there will be more and more and more and more, especially when peacetime settles the fabric shortage. We are trying to help you by working closely with the teen-age manufacturers and designers who make the clothes you look so well in. It isn't only the styling of these clothes that makes them right for you and for no other age group. It's the sizing too. The growing and sprouting and developing of the teen-age figure are all carefully considered and catered to in the cutting of teen sizes 10 to 16. (Incidentally, don't confuse these with Misses' sizes 10 to 20.) Here, in the editorial pages of *your* magazine, we feature only *your* sizes.²⁵

From its very first issue, *Seventeen* role-modeled shopping for the reader in the monthly "What You Wear" column, "We Go Shopping." In November, 1944, the name changed to "*Let's Go Shopping*," the new found imperative perhaps meant to communicate to the reader that she was definitely invited along. Written by beauty editor Irma Phorylles, "Let's Go Shopping" detailed in narrative form an imaginary teen girl's shopping adventures which, in an example of "covert advertising," included the names of specific stores and brands purchased.²⁶

Although usually accompanied by her best friend, Bunny, the April, 1945 "Girl-Meets-Boy" issue found our ardent shopper accompanied by her boy pal, Pete. References to boarding school, "Mummy," and a lifestyle that includes monthly spending sprees at upscale department stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue (especially under the economic duress of war-time constraints) signaled that this teen shopper

lived in an upper-class world. Although the reader herself might not have lived in a parallel universe, she could at least enjoy the experience vicariously – and, just in case, the column always includes enough information so that she could order the merchandise for herself.²⁷

Of course, *Seventeen's* editors recognized that not all of its readers could afford to go on the kind of shopping sprees that the ideal “Shopping” prepster enjoyed. For these readers, they offered advice on how to dress frugally, yet stylishly. They suggested sewing as a way to afford your clothes and wear them too. The July 1945 fashion spread, “Pattern Wardrobe,” for example, featured four pages of back-to-school clothes made from patterns and rhetorically asked the reader: “How about making the whole works yourself ... you save money, besides which you get exactly what you want.” In fact, unlike contemporary fashion magazines, *Seventeen* included “patterned” fashions in every issue. This was due in part to a government-led war effort to encourage women “Citizen Consumers” to sew their own clothes, investing any saved money in War bonds.²⁸ *Seventeen's* editor Helen Valentine even gave an address on the “importance of knowing how to sew” at a meeting for the “National Junior Sewing Project” held by the American Women’s Voluntary Service in April, 1945.²⁹

Through both fashion spreads and articles, *Seventeen* offered all of its readers, working class through upper class, an education in how to be a good consumer – “good” meaning active, but also thoughtful and responsible. For instance, fashion spreads sometimes promoted economical clothing, such as March 1945's “Cost: All

Less Than \$12" which featured "good buys" from the Jr. Deb Centre at Macy's.³⁰ In addition, how-to articles on shopping and putting together a functional and fashionable wardrobe began appearing in the second half of *Seventeen's* first year. Articles such as "Clothes Quandary: Its Cause and Cure,"³¹ "She Never Has a Thing to Wear,"³² and "Are There Skeletons in Your Closet"³³ directed the reader to prepare in advance for their shopping trip by assessing their own body type and figure flaws, inventorying and critiquing their existing wardrobe, and then planning a pragmatic buying strategy that would utilize their clothing budget to its best advantage. These articles took a middle-of-the-road approach to buying choices, advising quality over quantity. For example, the February 1945 quiz, "Clothes Harmony," instructs the reader through a series of "correct" answers to: "Allot as much money as your budget will stand" for "a major addition to your wardrobe, such as a coat," and generally buy "things with basically good lines and of fabrics that will last for more than one season."³⁴

Seventeen's advocacy of a thoughtful, responsible kind of consumption was a part of its overall discourse in which the editors walked a thin line between their fashion and service mandates, often trying to keep fashion in its place, advising the reader that it was neither all important nor unimportant. As they state in "Clothes Quandary":

Stressing clothes and appearance beyond all else would be superficial and silly. It's equally silly to look upon clothes as just something to protect you from the elements. First impressions are not to be sniffed at, and the way you look and dress does either much to get things going smoothly or curdle them from the start. This goes equally for when you're introduced to old family

friends, your blind date, or a prospective employer.³⁵

How You Feel and Look

While the articles and fashion spreads in “What You Wear” sold clothing and accessories (body wear), the articles in “How You Feel And Look,” sold health and good looks – and the products to achieve them (body care). Although they represented a relatively small percentage of the overall editorial discourse, the articles that appeared under this rubric offered, paragraph for paragraph, among the highest concentration of overt and highly detailed editorial advice. Often written by beauty editor Irma Phorylles, these articles dispensed health and grooming guidance that covered the body from head (“Acne”³⁶) to toe (“Your Feet: Friend or Foe?”³⁷), from nutrition (“Lucky Seven”³⁸) to diet (“Up and Down the Scale”³⁹), and from menstruation (“The Moon and the Mood”⁴⁰) to melanin (“Don’t Blister, Sister”⁴¹). Not unimportantly, they often stressed the relationship between the body, beauty and romance.

According to *Seventeen*, feeling and looking good began with a healthy body – not the anorexic-chic physique of more modern times, but a more accessible slim-fit silhouette. Phorylles described the ideal body type, and the means to achieve it, in her September 1945 article, “New Term... New You”:

You’d like to have a reasonably small amount of flesh attractively distributed on and according to your bony structure. Firm, clear, healthy flesh. The kind that comes from three definite meals a day with a minimum of feeding between them. [...] It is also achieved by a good balance of exercise – tennis, swimming, basketball, or any of the other active sports that keep your outdoors and working hard.⁴²

In that same article, however, Phorylles explained that a “good body” is not a stopping point, but instead a beginning point. The body is merely a canvas; to become work of art, it must be properly beautified and embellished. Grooming – the care, maintenance, and proper display of specific body features – is the ultimate “body project.”⁴³:

Diet and exercise will help you to a better-looking body, and a finer-looking skin, but we aren’t going to stop there. Not on your life, we aren’t. What about grooming for instance? For a very large instance. Grooming is a smooth, solid picture that is composed of countless little parts.⁴⁴

Teaching girls how to gild their lilies and polish their wares was a significant part of *Seventeen*’s lesson plan. To that end, the January 1945 issue heralded the arrival of an intermittent feature: the beauty makeover. Over the next three months, *Seventeen* ran a series of articles that taught real girls how to improve their appearance. Although Helen Valentine mentioned in her September 1944 credo letter the magazine’s intent “to give you plenty of pointers on how to build a new you,” this series ostensibly arose out of the magazine’s response to reader requests. As the editor’s note accompanying the first article in the series, “Is That Your Face In the Moon?” explains:

Your letters are the seeds from which our beauty articles grow. So many of you have asked us what to do for a face which is not a perfect oval, that we are starting a series which will tell you what you want to know. In each article we shall take a different type of face and show you what a famous authority can do with it.⁴⁵

Written by the prolific Phorylles, this series, somewhat ironically entitled “Becoming Friends with Your Face,” brought in beauty industry professionals such as

Elizabeth Arden and Helena Rubinstein to teach the tricks of their trade to the *Seventeen* reader. Photo spreads document the process as these beauty-Houdini's waved their mascara wands and – voila! – transformed the plain face of a real girl into the perfect face of the ideal girl.

Because grooming almost always necessitates the purchase of grooming “aids,” most of the beauty articles offered somewhat generic product suggestions (lipstick, shampoo, nail polish, etc.), while always admonishing that less is more on a teen girl. Teena's goal was to achieve a look that was neither too much nor too little, but *just right*. On occasion, *Seventeen* recommended actual product brands, but this was not typical, at least early on. However, in January of 1945, the magazine introduced a new monthly feature called “Dressing Table Talk, which spotlighted brand-name cosmetics for purchase.”⁴⁶

Seventeen's fashion and beauty articles reflected the norms of a fashion magazine, asking the reader to assess herself or her wardrobe, and advising her on self-improvement through consumption. However, the articles that fell under the remaining Table of Contents rubrics focused more on the reader's personality and character, sometimes even challenging the co-existing beauty and fashion directives.

Getting Along in the World

Articles organized under the Table of Contents section, “Getting Along in the World,” explored the reader's self-in-relation to others at home, school, work, and their community, and seem to most closely correspond to Valentine's early reference

to “What You Are.” These articles offered heaping helpings of direct advice on how the teen reader should think and behave in the various venues and relationships of her life. Although some articles covered the expected terrain of teen magazines, such as boy-girl relations (e.g., “First Date Quiz”⁴⁷ and “How Do You Rate as a Date?”⁴⁸), many more encouraged the reader to question the status quo, including the existing gender and racial stereotypes and boundaries. For example, while the magazine always counseled respect for one’s parents, it also encouraged standing up for one’s beliefs – particularly if those beliefs mirrored *Seventeen*’s. Alice Thompson wrote about the merit of a family debate in the July 1945 “For Seniors Only” column, subtitled “It’s Not an Easy Thing”:

But if you air your views, whether about your allowance, or about world politics, you may find some good mental stimulation in your family’s arguments. You may even prod Mother out of her housewifely confines to take a greater interest in history-making events. Or you may help her to rid herself of some worn-out old prejudices. And you may give your whole family a new awareness of the fact that the little girl they remember has grown into a thinking young woman. Then you will be on your *own*!”⁴⁹

Relatedly, the magazine encouraged the (assumed female) reader to challenge her parents on the issue of gender bias. For example, the March 1945 installment of “Why Don’t Parents Grow Up?” subtitled, “Jobs Have No Gender,” took on the topic of chores, informing the reader that: “Preparing food, serving, washing dishes, cleaning the living room and bath – should be shared by *all* the citizens of your home, according to the time and energy each has available.”⁵⁰ The May 1945 article “Lassies at the Lathe” attacked gender bias at school by featuring a high school carpentry class for girls. As the caption explained:

The boys guffawed when the senior girls at Teaneck High first started their course in carpentry. But these girls have taken to lathes and band saws with such ease that the tilt-top tables they make look quite professional. They've made themselves so at home in this corner of an alleged 'man's world' that even they are surprised.⁵¹

This article offers a good example of the sometimes contradictory discourses competing within the pages of *Seventeen* during this first year – in this case between the “feminine-beauty” and “gender-equality” threads.⁵² Although just pages earlier in this very same issue, Irma Phorylles wrote about the *vital* importance of nail grooming in her article, “Give Me Your Hand,” “Lassies at the Lathes” describes “nail polish [as] a constant casualty. A bit of sandpaper, and off it comes. But what's a little nail polish? This work is too fun to worry about such trivialities.”⁵³

The importance of school and work, and the relationship between the two, was a common thread that ran through every issue of *Seventeen*. Articles about school stressed doing well in high school generally, but also specifically, as with the article, “I Can't Work with Figures,” which admonished girls to become adept at math.⁵⁴ The June 1945 issue featured several articles encouraging college attendance, including “Send Yourself to College”; and “State College BA” – an *11 page* article detailing the enrollment policies at 74 state universities.⁵⁵

Interestingly, although articles about school abounded in the first 13 issues of the magazine, *Seventeen* actually published more articles on the topic of work during this period. Alice Thompson often addressed employment issues in the “For Seniors Only” column, advising the reader that “making a living” should be considered de rigueur for all women. From the column's very first installation, Thompson

encouraged the magazine's readers to consider careers in such male-dominated fields as medicine, science, law, engineering and business. In the January 1945 column (subtitle: "With Chance for Advancement"), Thompson gave very detailed information on entry-level jobs in advertising, public relations, magazine publication, photography, and costume design that could eventually lead to an upper-echelon position.⁵⁶ Such specific career counseling was common in the pages of *Seventeen* during the first year, as was the promotion of employment in fields and positions that were not thought of female-venues, including television production ("Vocation in Video"⁵⁷) and aviation ("Cadet Training Helps Win Wings"⁵⁸). *Seventeen's* writers also loved to plug the career that they knew best, magazine production ("I Want to Work on a Magazine"⁵⁹). One related job that warranted attention – ostensibly due to reader requests – was modeling; however, *Seventeen's* article on the topic, "Cover Girl," reads more as a cautionary tale (the subheading warns: "Modeling is a Very Strange Career – The More Popular You Are, The Sooner You're Through").⁶⁰ Interestingly, the one "career path" never pitched by *Seventeen* during the first year was homemaking. As twice-married Alice Thompson warned the reader in her very first column:

What kind of work do you want to do? However 'subject to change without notice,' you should have more than a hazy idea of how you will earn your living. A marriage license is no longer a stay-at-home guarantee. Your only real security is what you go out and get for yourself.⁶¹

Seventeen also included articles on money management as a part of "Getting Along in the World." In fact, the writers recite this mantra over and over again:

school leads to work and work leads to money, and money leads to independence. In articles like “Do Your Dollars Act Like Pennies?”⁶² *Seventeen* advised the reader on saving strategies and good money sense. In fact, during this war period, the magazine often promoted financially responsible consumption as well as a kind of anti-consumption. Financially responsible consumption messages encouraged the reader to shop frugally and thoughtfully, being cognizant of both the value of the product and the money that was used to purchase it. Anti-consumption messages suggested ways for readers to make things from items found in the home and how to care for the things she already owned. For example, “She Never Has a Thing To Wear” gave directions on caring for lingerie, sweaters, different types of fabric and shoes in order to extend their use.⁶³

Finally, “Getting Along in the World,” according to *Seventeen*, included the community beyond home, school, and work. The articles that addressed the reader's relationship to her community often related to the war and the changes wrought by WWII in mid-1940's America. In particular, *Seventeen* highlighted and encouraged community volunteerism in support of the war effort through articles like “First Aid for the Army”⁶⁴ and the monthly feature “Serving the U.S.” Other articles in this vein suggested – through direct advice or indirect examples – that the reader keep busy doing good works. Keeping teens busy, in fact, had become a society-wide mandate during this period, the war having exacerbated fears of teen delinquency, fueled by the concern that absent fathers and less parental oversight might lead – or was leading – to juvenile criminal behavior. “Teen canteens” and “teen towns,” formal meeting

places for youth to gather and socialize after school hours, arose as a solution to this perceived delinquency crisis.⁶⁵ *Seventeen* responded with articles about this teen trend, including, “How to Swing a Canteen,”⁶⁶ and “Teen Town at Jacksonville,”⁶⁷ as well as a monthly feature called “Next on the Agenda,” that debuted in the August 1945 issue.

Articles encouraging excellence of character appear under both the “Getting Along in the World” and “Your Mind” rubrics and were woven through with a common discursive thread that challenged prejudice and discrimination of any kind. Alice Thompson took on the subject in a special “For Human Beings Only” column, sub-titled: “I’m Not Prejudiced, But...”⁶⁸ Using Nazi Germany as her jumping off point, she decried *all* prejudices – specifically mentioning those based on gender, religion, race, and national origin – and assigned blame to family and cultural socialization:

We’re brought up to dislike ‘wops,’ or ‘kikes,’ or ‘micks,’ or ‘niggers,’ or ‘bohunks,’ or Mexes.’ Every part of the country has its own set of pet prejudices. Each of us acquires them and they grow stronger as we grow older because it makes you feel good to be better than someone else.⁶⁹

Thompson challenged the reader to fight discrimination by considering every human being individually, and not as the member of a group. She ended her essay with an ominous warning that: “If we don’t stop ourselves, if we can’t beat this ugly thing called prejudice, it will catch us all – and that does mean you.”⁷⁰

Home. School. Work. Community. These were the parameters of the world as addressed in the articles of “Getting Along in the World.” But this was a contained

world, ending at the edge of the manicured lawns of middle- and upper-class America. A more realistic title might have been, "Getting Along in *Your* World." Or even more accurately, "Getting Along in *Teena's* World" – the world of the prototypical U.S. teenager: a world where "home" assumed a house, parents, siblings and an education in American schools that would lead to the pursuit of the American dream – fulfilling work and fair wages. A social life that included hanging out with friends and dates with boys. The outside world – the world beyond middle-class America, the world of *others* – that was the literary territory covered by the articles in *Seventeen's* categorical section, "Your Mind."

Your Mind

Written with passion and sincerity, often by *Seventeen* principals such as Helen Valentine or Alice Thompson, the articles in "Your Mind" urged the *Seventeen* reader to notice the world beyond her own, the world not covered in "Getting Along in the World," the world of ideas and ideologies. Simultaneously staunchly American and expansively global, these articles were shaped and informed by World War II, as seen through the prism of editor Valentine's progressive politics. The "Your Mind" articles tended to be guided by a different sensibility – one of a higher calling – and the word that best described and united them as a discursive whole was "citizenship." The mind-set shifted from "what's best for me and my world" to "what's best for America and the World." Thus, with an almost evangelistic fervor, *Seventeen* exhorted its readers to be the best American and *global* citizens that they could be.

Seventeen preached overcoming prejudice as a necessary element of good

citizenship. As one strategy to achieving this end, the writers encouraged their readers to exit their comfort zones (even if just in the abstract) and to meet and get to know people who were “different” from themselves (or, more correctly, from the assumed reader-self: a middle-class white girl). Articles under the “Your Mind” rubric often facilitated these introductions by featuring people that the typical reader would not likely meet in her own home town. For example, *Seventeen* ran a series of articles that highlighted the lives of high school girls in other countries – or, more specifically, in America’s war allied countries. The first of these documented the girls of Great Britain, followed by China, Russia, India, France, Latin America, Canada, Turkey, Hawaii, and finally Sweden.⁷¹ These articles detailed serious elements in the lives of girls from other nations, including their war work, schooling, family structures, gender roles, and career aspirations, as well as less serious topics such as social lives and – when applicable – boy/girl relationships (in many of the countries, romantic relationships were not condoned until young adulthood). In that vein, the feature on Hawaiian girls had a very interesting –and progressive take – on ethnic intermarriage, stating that:

Many generations of intermarriage of all races and nationalities have produced a polygenetic people. There is no race prejudice or discrimination among the Orientals, Caucasians and Polynesians represented. There isn’t even a realization that they represent the most democratic of all melting pots.⁷²

In the near future, this kind of discourse, positively portraying the breaking down of ethnic/racial boundaries, would create considerable dissonance between liberal-leaning Helen Valentine and her staunchly conservative publisher, Walter

Annenberg.⁷³ But in the early years of the magazine, under Valentine's direction and especially during the war, the progressive discourse prevailed. On the other hand, the magazine tread lightly and slowly into an illustrative desegregation. Pictures of dark-skinned "foreigners" (such as the girls in other countries series) were often the only counterpoint to the light skinned American "Teenies" who dominated the fashion photographic landscape of *Seventeen*. The first picture of a non-white American girl appeared in March, 1945, in an article about the School of American Ballet which featured a photo of "willowly, vital Betty Nichols, pretty negro girl [and] dancer in Billy Rose's 'Carmen Jones.'"⁷⁴ The "Your Mind" monthly feature "Teens in the News" also offered an occasional opening for pictures of American teens of color. For example, the April, 1945 installment featured a brief paragraph and picture of Chinese-American "authoress Christina Chan, sixteen, and her fifteen-year-old artist brother, Plato."⁷⁵ Two months later, "Teens in the News" highlighted African-American teen, Thelma Porter, winner of a beauty-charm contest in her New York borough of Brooklyn.⁷⁶ And in this same issue, an article about canning included a small inset picture of a young African-American woman at work.⁷⁷ Valentine's insistence on the inclusion of pictures of African-American teen-agers, however minimal, would become a bitter point of contention between her and Walter Annenberg in the intervening months and years.

When *Seventeen* spoke of overcoming prejudice, it seemed to speak to a generalized readership of young white women. However, an article about battling prejudice and discrimination elicited a response from a reader that reminds that this

wasn't always the case. "T. F." from Chicago wrote:

I've just finished reading the article "What Kind of a World Do You Want?" I wish I could really tell you how I feel. You see, I'm a Negro and my people are one of the many victims of prejudice.

T. F. thanked *Seventeen* for printing the article, which she said helped her to better understand the mechanics of prejudice, but she also included a suggestion, challenging the editors to go even further in their fight against ignorance and discrimination:

Could you have an article written on the part the colored boys are taking in this war? They're not all smiles the way pictures show them. They work hard. They sweat and shed blood, too. They give their lives, and above all, they're human.⁷⁸

The war and the citizenship discourse were often intertwined and Helen Valentine's December 1944 Frontispiece essay, "First Christmas," offers a great example of this:

Here it is – SEVENTEEN's first Christmas, but somehow the usual greetings choke in our throat. It isn't easy to sing out a merry message when the world is saddened by separations and destruction and death. But, like the star that once brightened a dark sky, hope shines again in the eyes of those who have been liberated from the prison of Fascism. Fortunately, for them and for us, valor toughens the spirit of those who fight against oppression – confident that freedom is close at hand. This Christmas let us celebrate by giving friendship– and understanding – to people of all faiths in all parts of the world. Let us send them help and comfort and love, so that they may know they have brothers and sisters across the sea. This new-found sense of universal kinship should do much to gladden us now and make merry the peacetime Christmases to come.⁷⁹

A myriad of articles in the "Your Mind" section focused on the war specifically, their titles asking the reader questions like: "What are You Doing About the War?"⁸⁰ and "Military Training – Should it Be Compulsory?"⁸¹ Liberally (in both

senses of the word) doling out information on the political process, *Seventeen* informed the reader about the importance of voting,⁸² a free press,⁸³ and the “Community Forum” movement.⁸⁴ An overtly staunch proponent for the creation and development of the United Nations, *Seventeen* published an incredibly detailed exposition of the Dumbarton Oaks Plan.⁸⁵ In addition, John Ashworth, a propaganda analyst for the Office of War Information, wrote a series of articles for *Seventeen* on the U.N. and related political topics, including, “Discussing Our Foreign Policy,”⁸⁶ “The Bretton Woods Plan,”⁸⁷ “The Fight Against Inflation,”⁸⁸ and “Blueprint for a Better World.”⁸⁹ Although the U.S. government issued Ashworth’s paycheck, *Seventeen* assured the reader that “[w]hen he writes for SEVENTEEN, he expresses his own views, of course, and not those of the Governments.”⁹⁰

Seventeen neglected to mention, however, that during the war, the government was routinely expressing its views to magazine editors through the *Magazine War Guide* (MWG).⁹¹ Some of the government’s promoted topics that received corresponding coverage in *Seventeen* during this period included: high school graduation,⁹² canning,⁹³ inflation,⁹⁴ home safety,⁹⁵ Christmas mail to the troops,⁹⁶ Red Cross membership,⁹⁷ nurse recruitment,⁹⁸ teacher recruitment,⁹⁹ the Dumbarton Oaks Plan,¹⁰⁰ and victory garden farming.¹⁰¹ One MWG suggested topic that did not receive coverage in *Seventeen*, however, despite its seeming relevancy, was the increase in venereal diseases in the under-20 population. *Seventeen* apparently drew the line at such explicit sex education in their own “war work.” And while *Seventeen* definitely accommodated the government with the inclusion of articles addressing

suggested topics, they still represented a tiny percentage of the magazine's articles. .

Finally, the "Your Mind" section included somewhat lighter fare, such as book and music review columns and articles about "high" culture and science. Books recommended in *Seventeen's* monthly literary review column covered the same discursive territory as the magazine itself. The recommendations ran the gamut, from fiction to non-fiction and from serious topics of history, politics, and career exploration to the fluffier fare of etiquette, popular culture, and romance. Still, the magazine occasionally exhibited a judgmental attitude about what constituted valuable reading material, taking a stand against silly mindless frivolity and for serious cerebral heft. Take, for example, this excerpt from the April 1945 "Books" column, which sounds as if it were written by a prudish Marxist librarian:

The word "Escapist" is a popular polysyllable meaning "Read 'em and Leave 'em." "Flip Through 'em and Forget 'em." As a matter of fact a *lot* of those "one night stand" books that you see at the Little Booke Nooke Around the Corner would be better off if they were carefully collected by the Boy Scout Waste Paper Squad, and dumped back into the hopper for another try. For there's actually enough opiate content on most public book-shelves today to put us all into a comotose [sic] state for the rest of our lives.¹⁰²

Having Fun

Of course, sometimes even the most serious, goal-oriented teen girls "just wanna have fun," so *Seventeen* also included monthly features on entertainment and entertaining, as well as comics and puzzles, all grouped under the rubric of "Having Fun." The backbone of this substantial section was its monthly features, which included "Mental Gymnasium" (brain-teasers), the music and film review columns "Music on a Platter" and "*Seventeen* Selects," "Radio Column," and a comic by artist

Betty Betz and fiction editor Anne Clark that humorously educated the readership in how *not* to behave in a myriad of situations (starring a bumbling “anti-Teena”).

Some of the monthly features that first appeared in this category were holdovers from *Stardom* that quickly disappeared as *Seventeen* grew into its own identity. For example, the first issue of *Seventeen* featured a *Stardom* celebrity column entitled “Hollywood Table Talk,” but it disappeared within months. Another *Stardom* holdover, the movie review column, “Movie Menu,” was retained, but under the new name of “*Seventeen* Selects.” Although *Stardom*’s entertainment industry focus diminished considerably under the *Seventeen* moniker, *Stardom*’s legacy continued on in “Having Fun’s” articles on the lives and careers of the era’s most popular entertainers. These articles generally chronicled the lives of two rather opposite groups: famous male entertainers and teenage girl actresses (or the teenage daughters of adult entertainers). Dixon Gayer, who penned *Seventeen*’s music review column, “Music on a Platter,” also interviewed and wrote articles about jazz musicians such as Xavier Cugat,¹⁰³ Cab Calloway,¹⁰⁴ Woody Herman,¹⁰⁵ Charlie Spivak,¹⁰⁶ Hal McIntyre,¹⁰⁷ Artie Shaw,¹⁰⁸ and Louis Prima.¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, many of these artists were men of color, and their pictures introduced some racial and ethnic diversity into *Seventeen*’s photographic landscape. On the other hand, the teen actresses and daughters featured, as representatives of the “Teena” ideal, were all white.

Interestingly, this section served to demarcate *Seventeen*’s designation of activities that existed for the sake of enjoyment from activities that were considered

“work.” For example, activities that we sometimes consider pleasurable – grooming, shopping, relationships, and reading – appear *not* in the “Having Fun” section, but instead in other sections, portrayed not as leisure activities but as other forms of labor that need to be pursued in order to achieve an ideal personhood. Perhaps even more significant, however, is that under this rubric, *Seventeen* identified different kinds of *work* as *fun*. Celebrity articles almost always represented paid labor in the entertainment industry as both glamorous and enjoyable.¹¹⁰ In addition, *Seventeen* added a monthly column to this section in March, 1945, called “Radio Column,” which featured teens working in the radio industry. And as time progressed, a growing cache of articles about other types of jobs were considered as “Having Fun.” For example, the May 1945 article, “What a Way to Earn a Living!”¹¹¹ described eleven workers (more than half of them women) doing “fun” jobs in the sciences. Finally, *Seventeen*’s editors often presented their own work as “fun,” as in the First Birthday issue article, “Editors Are Frequently People.”¹¹²

Seventeen also constructed the work of the home as fun – a leisure endeavor, rather than a required task. Cooking, in particular, was presented as something that teens did for enjoyment. Thus, included among the entertainment articles of “Having Fun” was the intermittent feature, “*Seventeen* Cooks,” in which teens were invited into “Macy’s Home Centre” to test out recipes, often for parties or festive events. Following their own assertion that “chores have no gender,” *Seventeen* invited boys into the kitchen, too, for an opportunity to prepare and serve food to an audience of girls. Through this experience, boys learned that cooking could be enjoyable; as one

young man exclaimed, “I never thought I’d make a salad – and like it.”¹¹³

Generally speaking, the reader could always expect to find stability and continuity in the organization of the magazine’s Table of Contents – with the exception of one issue. *Seventeen’s* December issue expanded to include a special category entitled “Gift Ideas,” which featured seven articles with suggestions for Christmas presents to give and to request. Tellingly, this December holiday issue included no mention of Hanukkah, despite the shared Jewish heritage of editor Valentine and publisher Annenberg. *Seventeen’s* world mirrored the world in which it was created and produced – an American society whose roots were firmly entrenched in a kind of generalized Christianity that pervaded and propelled both culture and commerce.

CONCLUSION

In celebration of *Seventeen’s* first birthday, Triangle Publications hosted a “birthday anniversary” cocktail party for staff and advertisers at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, an open invitation to which ran in the *New York Times*.¹¹⁴ In the magazine’s September 1945 Birthday Issue, Helen Valentine returned to her introductory letter and reflected back over the past twelve months, specifically considering the promises made in her early credo. Again using creative literary devices to elucidate and amplify her message to the reader, Valentine reprints the original letter in italics and identifies her “current” thoughts in regular type.

Happy Birthday

In my right hand a pencil – in my left a slice of the birthday cake you see on

the opposite page. And in my heart a warm feeling of gratitude that our first birthday has brought SEVENTEEN so many friends. You've made it a busy but wonderful year. We sometimes wonder what gave us the courage and incentive to start SEVENTEEN. Probably it was the deep-seated conviction that you high school girls really needed, really wanted a magazine of your own – the very special kind of magazine which we outlined in our original credo:

SEVENTEEN is interested only in you – and in everything that concerns, excites, annoys, pleases or perplexes you. We still are – and always will be!

*SEVENTEEN is interested in **how you dress**. We're not much on the tricky stuff, but we believe clothes must be right for you and the time, place and occasion for which you'll wear them."* We tried to live up to this. We hope you liked our fashions.

*We care about **how you feel and how you look**. Those two always go together. Keats said "Truth is Beauty." We have no quarrel with that – but for practical purposes health is beauty. With good health as a beginning, we hope to give you plenty of pointers on how to build a new you – which, if it doesn't knock 'em cold, at least will make people pleasantly aware of you as a person. Well, have we been of any help? Your letters seem to say yes.*

But, to our way of thinking far more important, we've tried to be useful in other ways too. A year ago this month we said to you:

*SEVENTEEN is interested in **what you do**. Are you a music fiend, a bookworm, a movie fan? Do you like art, history, poetry or humor? Do you squander your leisure, or do you consider time a precious commodity? Today, with all there is to do, this last question seems to be doubly pertinent.*

*We're keenly interested in **what you think**. Are you so baffled by the confusions of reality that you take refuge in a world of your own? Or do you feel that the world is your oyster – just waiting to be opened and produce its pearl? In fact, have you that knife right at hand? It's time to start prying.*

*But – most important of all – SEVENTEEN is interested in **what you are** ... the kind of human being you are. Are you tense and ill-at-ease or comfortable and relaxed? Have you a chip on your shoulder or a smile on your lips? Are you interested only in yourself and your closest family and friends, or do you care what happens to people you'll never see? We'd all better care about all peoples, now that we know it's really one world!*

And in that very first issue I reminded you that you are going to have to run

this world of ours – so the sooner you start thinking about it the better. From the thousands of letters you have sent us I would say that you *are* thinking about it – and thinking straight. You're interested in boys and books, clothes and current events, people and politics, cooking and careers ... in fact, you're interested in everything. Your curiosity about your world and everybody in it has made our job easier, happier. We life finding out that reprint orders for the Dumbarton Oaks article have kept pace with requests for dress patterns ... that you like to read about *both* Toscanini and Harry James.

Our hope for a better world rests with you. We know you'll do a good job. Every member of our staff wishes you well and thanks you warmly for making this such a very happy birthday. – H.V.¹¹⁵

Thus, a year went by at *Seventeen* – a very eventful year for America and the world beyond; a year filled with national and global highs and lows, from the death of President Roosevelt and the birth of a new presidency for Harry S. Truman, to the dropping of the Atomic bomb on Japan and the end of the Second World War. It was also a year that saw the creation of a fledgling magazine and an entirely original magazine genre: *Seventeen*, the first teen magazine. Although the relatively infant concept of the “teen-ager” existed prior to *Seventeen's* entry into the marketplace, the two developed somewhat in tandem thereafter. Particularly in relation to teen girls, *Seventeen* placed itself in the lead position, presenting itself as an authority on the teen girl ideal and offering copious amounts of direction on its achievement.

Seventeen's Table of Contents offered not just a discursive mapping of the magazine's text, but also its conceptualization of the parameters of an ideal teen girl's life: her body (“What You Wear” and “How You Feel and Look”); her world (“Getting Along in the World”); her mind (“Your Mind”); and her leisure (“Having Fun”). *Seventeen* presented each of these parameters as teen girl work-sites, and the

articles and features that appeared under each of these rubrics illustrated, through pictures and text, the kind of labor necessary to achieve the teen girl ideal.

According to the magazine, a teen girl's body was an important work-site, one that could only be ignored at the risk of one's social status (and later, marital status). *Seventeen*, in its role as caring older sister/favorite aunt, doled out a fair amount of body care advice, ostensibly to help its readership achieve an already existing ideal – to succeed, as best they could, in the environment in which they lived. *Seventeen's* body advice was moderated, to some extent, by an appreciation for its readership's youth. Beauty articles warned against looking too adult, arguing instead for simple cleanliness, good grooming, and physical fitness (and a little touch of lipstick). The ideal teen-age girl look, as promoted by *Seventeen*, was definitely more pristinely virginal than seductively vampish. However, virginity being a temporary status on the way to marriage (at least in fairy tales), the desire for heterosexual romance underlaid much of the body discourse. In addition, the body work encouraged by *Seventeen* often necessitated some sort of product purchase, be it soap, shampoo or saddle shoes. Thus, consuming as labor was an embedded part of a teen girl's body work – perhaps less visible (it didn't have its own Table of Contents category), but no less important an endeavor. On the other hand, the war period ideology of frugality, as well as the material limitations on resources, tempered *Seventeen's* advocacy of consumption, and articles that encouraged shopping also endorsed responsible spending.

Seventeen presented the body as merely one of several work-sites in a teen

girl's life. Just as critical, if not more, was her attention to her work in her world and in her mind. As an American citizen, the articles of "Getting Along in the World" advised the reader in her day-to-day pursuits, both present and future. They encouraged her to excel in school, volunteer in her community, attend college, plan for a future career, and learn how to manage her (own) money. *Seventeen's* writers preached gender and racial equality in American life, whether at home, school, clubs, or the workplace. The articles of "Your Mind" expanded this ideology to include the rest of the world, calling upon the reader to view herself as a global citizen. Readers were reminded that as the future leaders of the world, they needed to prepare for their adult tomorrows through intellectual labor today. To this end, *Seventeen* passionately advised them to expand their minds, filling every brain cell with information about politics, geography, history, and culture.

Finally, the evolving conceptualization of the "teen-ager" of the 1940's included the personality characteristic of a "fun-loving" nature.¹¹⁶ Thus, *Seventeen*, as a teen magazine, couldn't very well ask teen girls to pursue a life of all work and no play. To counterbalance all the labor inherent in the other three work-sites, *Seventeen* built a little leisure into an ideal teen girl's life. As represented in the magazine, "fun" for a teen girl included reading about entertainers' lives, learning about the entertainment industry, going to movies, listening to music, pursuing hobbies and sports – and cooking. Indeed, war period *Seventeen* identified kitchen tasks as "fun" – i.e., leisurely activities enjoyed by both girls and boys.

Several factors influenced the magazine's early content and its construction of

the ideal teen girl parameters, chief among them the editorial vision of editor-in-chief Helen Valentine, the environment of World War II, and the economic mandates of running a financially solvent magazine. Valentine's vision was informed by her own experience as a working wife and mother and by her progressive politics.

Approaching her readership as thoughtful, teachable young women, she schooled them in the values that had served her own life well: education, career, family, community service, gender equality, universal kinship – as well as charm and style. During the magazine's first year, however, fashion often took a backseat to service.

World War II offered a very conducive environment for Valentine's progressive doctrine to express itself in the pages of *Seventeen*. The war created societal openings that made, for its duration, gender and racial boundaries more permeable, certainly in regard to occupational opportunities and ideologies of "brotherhood" across nations. On the other hand, some boundaries stood firm. While *Seventeen* included occasional pictures of teens and adults of color, the magazine's representatives of the "Teena" teen girl ideal were always white. And while Walter Annenberg would soon take it upon himself to patrol the magazine's color barrier, it was – to be fair – not a barrier of his making, but one that already existed in American society. And as *Seventeen's* financial manager, one of his primary concerns was to not offend advertisers, the economic backbone of the magazine.¹¹⁷

Indeed, *Seventeen* had to be financially successful in order to continue to thrive, and advertisers held the key to the magazine's success. Thus, an immediate task in ensuring *Seventeen's* healthy growth was to garner the attention and economic

support of business. And that's where Estelle Ellis's promotional campaign came in.

CHAPTER 4

"Teena Goes to Market": *Seventeen* Constructs the Ideal Teen Consumer¹

And this was really a wilderness time, it was like discovering a whole new country. Because there was no awareness – not only of teenagers – but there was no awareness of teenage girls, there was no awareness of how they dressed, or the clothes they needed. There wasn't even anyone producing clothes for this age group. There was no cosmetics being created for this age group. So it's hard to believe it, but at that time, it was totally ... new terrain. New territory, new country to be discovered. (Estelle Ellis, Promotion Director at *Seventeen* from September 1944 through March 1950)²

Seventeen staffers ventured into the "wilderness" of the 40's, constructing the concept of the "teenage" girl in several venues and to different constituencies. In the magazine, they advised the high school reader on how to be an ideal teen girl."³ But *Seventeen* was also instrumental in constructing the teen girl through its education and instruction of adults, particularly those in the advertising and retail industries. Because the magazine could not succeed without the financial support of advertisers, the immediate task at hand for the fledgling magazine was to sell business on the teen girl as an ideal consumer. *Seventeen's* young promotion director Estelle Ellis served as liaison between the magazine and the business community, and she produced an extremely innovative promotion campaign that introduced the teen girl to business(men), a match that would lead to a long-term relationship between buyer and seller. For their part in creating an awareness of teens as buyers, the original *Seventeen* staffers can claim (and have claimed) their role in unleashing the "youth quake" that shook the nation in the second half of the 20th century.⁴

MEET ESTELLE ELLIS⁵

Although they shared a common Jewish heritage and immigrant parents, Estelle Ellis's family background couldn't have been more different than that of *Seventeen's* editor, Helen Valentine, and publisher Walter Annenberg. Their differences could be gauged by the New York addresses of their youth: Valentine was born and raised in affluent Manhattan; Annenberg spent his adolescence in a Long Island mansion. Estelle, on the other hand, born a decade after Annenberg and more than two decades later than Valentine, grew up in a working class neighborhood in Brooklyn, where her father, Russian immigrant Peter Ellis, labored as an electrician, and her mother, Latvian immigrant Bessie Caplan, ran her own in-home sewing business.⁶

Peter and Bessie raised Estelle and her sister during the Depression years when, for many Americans, work and money were hard to come by. Perhaps because of this, Estelle never questioned whether she would eventually work or not – from her vantage point as a young working class woman, the necessity of paid employment was just a fact of life. Certainly, as opposed to Helen Valentine, she didn't have the luxury of contemplating the "choice" between being a homemaker or a working girl. Other forces, however, also shaped Estelle's occupational aspirations. Bessie raised her daughter to be a "careerist" and Estelle reports that her vision of what a woman careerist might do was informed by popular culture. As a youth, she aspired to be a "girl reporter" like the ones she watched in the films of her adolescence. Ellis came

of age in the 1930's and 40's, a cultural time period that produced literature and movies with extremely positive women role models.⁷ On film, actresses such as Katherine Hepburn (in *The Philadelphia Story* and *Adam's Rib*), Greer Garson (in *Pride and Prejudice*), Judy Garland (in *The Wizard of Oz*), Myrna Loy (in *The Thin Man* series) and Vivien Leigh (in *Gone with the Wind*) portrayed women who were strong, smart, sassy and savvy. When Estelle remembers "girl reporters" in movies, she is most likely including Rosalind Russell, who played ace reporter Hildy Johnson in the 1940 classic film, *His Girl Friday*. In many ways, Estelle would follow Hildy's lead, pursuing a career in print journalism, retaining her maiden name, and competing toe-to-toe with the best of the boy journalists.

While Estelle dreamt of a future based on what she saw on the movie screen, her goals for her immediate future were more down-to-earth. Although neither of her parents had much formal schooling, her mother encouraged Estelle to pursue higher education. Estelle, ever the pragmatist, viewed college as a means to a logical end: gainful employment. She approached her decision to attend Hunter College in New York City in a no-nonsense way that didn't include consciously-articulated goals of feminist empowerment or domestic dreams of meeting a potential husband. As she explains in her oral history:

I was the first child in the family to get to college and I was part of a generation that was not sensitive to the issues of does a women work or doesn't a woman work. The fact that I got to college certainly carried with it the promise that I would quickly earn some income to be able to help support my family, my mother and father, and so at no point was there any question about whether or not I would work.⁸

Estelle's experience as a student at Hunter was worlds apart from Helen Valentine's experiences at prestigious Barnard College. At the time of Estelle's enrollment, Hunter's "campus" was strewn across the city and students would have to trek from site to site in order to attend classes. As described by Estelle, it was far from an idyllic situation:

[I] traveled by subway to Hunter College, before they had one building. Went all the way up to the Bronx, then went to a factory building here on Park Avenue. It was murderous. I have no sense of having gone to a college. Going to my classroom was like going to Macy's on Thursday night when I worked there, I mean it was no different. I can't even begin to tell you anything about my college years because all I was a drone.⁹

Estelle graduated from Hunter in June of 1940 with a Political Science major/ Journalism minor. While there, she met Samuel Rubinstein, a young man who would become her husband of 50 years. Her first job out of Hunter was as the assistant – or as Estelle describes, "Girl Friday" – to John Hammond, the promotion director of *Popular Science* magazine.¹⁰ This job became the door through which she entered a half century long career in marketing and promotions.

Estelle's tenure at *Popular Science*, though relatively short-lived, offered an invaluable business experience. *Popular Science* was her training ground, a "classroom" in which she was introduced to marketing ideas and strategies that she would later apply in her own work as promotion director at *Seventeen*. In particular, she learned about the emerging concept of magazine genres and their role in the targeting of very specific audiences.¹¹ She also observed the strategy of getting educators to use magazines as teaching tools, which she later reprised at *Seventeen*.

Estelle describes her education in marketing at *Popular Science* in her oral history:

The man who was the president of *Popular Science* Publishing Corp understood the value of having a magazine that schools could relate to and he was very jealous of the position that *Mademoiselle* had as a magazine for college girls and he observed that and he determined that the time had come to produce a magazine for high school girls and he thought that the same logic would apply. He would instead relate to home economics classes and he would have his in with educators and he'd be able to tell advertisers that he could reach young women in high school and he would then be able to reap the benefit of the early recognition that the young woman consumer was a valuable person to be marketing products to.¹²

Using *Mademoiselle* as an exemplar, Hammond created *Design for Living* in September of 1941, targeting high school girls, home economics teachers, and advertisers. Hammond tapped Estelle to assist *Design's* editor, Tess Buxton. As Estelle explains, her value to the new enterprise was primarily based on her youth:

...I was the only young face around there [so] he let this lady borrow me to become her promotional assistant or to do her promotion for *Design for Living*, identifying me with the age group.¹³

Estelle loved her work in promotions so fervently that she referred to herself as a "promotion groupie."¹⁴ And as groupies are wont to do, she sought out models of excellence to admire and emulate. It was during this time that Ellis discovered and began following the work of Helen Valentine, promotion director at *Mademoiselle*. As she describes it:

But I, during this period already, had some sense of the fact that *Mademoiselle* had the best promotion director of them all. [...] I began to collect all her promotion material, this lady called Helen Valentine.¹⁵

Unfortunately for Estelle and the staff of *Design for Living*, the magazine published only four issues before the bombing of Pearl Harbor necessitated

restrictions on the public use of paper. Although *Design for Living* died under the pressures of competing war demands, its lessons lived on in the person of Estelle Ellis, who later implemented some of the very same marketing strategies in her work as the promotions director of *Seventeen* magazine.

Before Estelle would move on to *Seventeen*, however, she had some more in-the-trenches occupational training in store. After *Design for Living* folded, she found a job as an advertising copywriter – definitely not her first choice in work or workplaces. She dreamt of promoting one of the elite fashion magazines produced by the prestigious publication houses of that time period, particularly Street & Smith (publisher of *Mademoiselle* and *Charm*) and Condé Nast (publisher of *Glamour* and *Vogue*). According to Estelle, however, these types of jobs were completely out of her reach, for reasons that had nothing to do with her talent, drive or intellect:

... I can look back and think that I wasn't of the social class or of the religious persuasion that they were looking for. [...] But the point was, I was also not of the social class. They were hiring debutantes. As you know, in those days they were hiring rich kids out of the Ivy League schools who were very happy to work for practically nothing to be part of the chic world of the fashion magazine. [...] Well, I was kid from Brooklyn with a big behind and no knowledge of what social smarts were. I wasn't their candidate. [...] A kid who came from Brooklyn didn't get a job at Condé Nast or Street and Smith.¹⁶

Even today, entry-level jobs at contemporary fashion magazines continue to be filled by young upper class women whose generous family finances supplement their otherwise meager salaries.¹⁷ But while Estelle's working class origins may have slowed her progress into the elite world of fashion magazines, she remained undaunted. Throughout her life, she approached these kinds of social class issues

with humor, intellect and a dogged persistence that broke down barriers of discrimination. She may not have had an ivy-covered mansion pedigree or an Ivy League degree, but she had smarts and chutzpah – and they would prove an indomitable force as she moved forward in her career.

An additional resource that Estelle developed as she matured was her ability to project a “persona” that communicated education and good breeding and often enabled her to “pass” for someone from a completely different background. As she explains in her oral history:

I never sounded like a Jewish kid from Brooklyn... You might say how the hell did I ever develop this voice and this diction and the way I talk, which makes so many people who meet me from out of town (because I did a lot of traveling in my business career) say, “You cannot have come from New York.” You know, they just assume that I came from somewhere else because I don’t speak as a New Yorker nor as a Jewish person from Brooklyn.¹⁸

After a short stint at the advertising agency, Estelle re-entered the magazine publishing world, landing a job at Walter Annenberg’s Triangle Publications. Initially hired as the fashion and beauty editor at *Screen Guide*, a movie/fan magazine, Estelle quickly earned a promotion to women’s editor of photomagazine *Click*. At *Click* she had her first glimpse into Walter’s quest to repair his family’s reputation:

You know, the whole thing [*Click* magazine] was integrated to create a respectability for a publication that the advertising agencies in this country were not taking seriously. Number one, because of its heritage, and number two, because Walter Annenberg was identified with racing form publishing.¹⁹

Estelle learned a lot about the magazine business at *Click*, but her most important and life-changing discovery there occurred in a chance meeting in a

building elevator, when she found herself face-to-face with her professional idol, Helen Valentine. The story of how 25-year-old Estelle Ellis met 51-year-old Helen Valentine has become so much a part of Estelle's own historical lore that she tells it often, and each telling differs negligibly from past re-tellings. In fact, the repetition of the story is reminiscent of the oral transmission of memories relied upon by past cultures. In her oral history, she begins the story at her own beginning, when Helen has just been hired by Walter Annenberg to edit Triangle's newest publication,

Seventeen:

And that was the beginning. And there I was, in that area where she [Helen] started her magazine, and by somebody looking out after my good interests up there, I met her – this woman who I had been dying to work for and never was allowed to meet – on an elevator, and I told her with what passion I viewed her work and she said, “What do you do?” and I told her and she said, “I’d like to see your stuff.” So the next morning I showed her my stuff and the next thing I knew I was hired to become the first promotion director of *Seventeen* and I worked with this woman for 13 years. The first issue we put out together was September 1944 and it was the first issue of *Seventeen* and that’s really where it begins for me.²⁰

For Estelle, this was a meeting of mythic import, and she tells the tale in a Biblical style: “In the beginning” there was Helen, and due to the efforts of a creator (“somebody ... up there”), Estelle gains entrance to a publishing Garden of Eden – a site for which gates had previously kept her on the outside looking in. This is the juncture at which Estelle marks her real career beginnings; it was also the beginning of the “the good book,” a/k/a *Seventeen* magazine.

SELLING SEVENTEEN BY SELLING TEENA

Estelle's job as promotion director at *Seventeen* involved the development of a

sales campaign for the magazine, but her overarching mandate was to define and communicate the importance of the teenage girl/market to business.²¹ Her conceptualization of, and approach toward, the campaign was particularly innovative for its time, and drew from the lessons learned by both she and Helen Valentine in their previous experiences at other magazines. In particular, Helen benefited from seeing the economic windfall of identifying and harnessing the market demographic of college-age women at *Mademoiselle*. *Seventeen* imported the strategy and applied it to their high school-aged “younger sisters.” Both of these magazines broke new ground through their use of social science concepts and methods in order to gain a better understanding of business relationships.

Both *Seventeen* and *Mademoiselle* differed from their publishing competition in their focus on the consumer, and their instruction to business to do the same: “Retailer,” they implored through their promotional campaigns, “know thy buyer.” Estelle describes the shift in focus as a move from merchandising to marketing – or from a producer to a consumer orientation. “Merchandising,” she explains, “is solving problems by thinking of products, not people; marketing is making the human connection.”²² This marketing perspective allowed *Seventeen*’s creators, and particularly Ellis and the promotion staff, to view their role in introducing business to the teen girl consumer as a relatively altruistic endeavor – an extension of the original service mission of the magazine. Ultimately, as Ellis sees it retrospectively, they were meeting the needs of both teenage girls and business people. Ellis proudly speaks of *Seventeen*’s service to business:

...we were helping corporations move away from their production orientation and we were helping them grow their business by thinking of consumers and not thinking only in terms of the equipment that they had and the products they could produce, but rather insisting that they evaluate what people need and then they should produce that...And we said that was the difference between consumer orientation and production orientation and it was reshaping industry.²³

as well as its service to the teen-age girl consumer, by “seeing people and translating people’s wants and needs and patterns of life and their value base and their priorities and translating that in terms of who needs what now.”²⁴ Indeed, from Estelle’s perspective, she was in the business of helping teen girls receive what they wanted and needed.

Ellis had a team of assistants – about 6 or 7 writers and artists – who, among other duties, would hold down the fort while she was away on business trips. As she explains, her job as the Pied Piper of *Seventeen* required extensive travel:

[...] I had to do a lot of traveling, as you know which is part of the job, because I was beating a tambourine, like recruiting for the Salvation Army, I was, you know, proselytizing, awakening the country to the importance of a hidden generation of young people, of young women.²⁵

Whether on the road or at home, Estelle’s job as promotion director required her to transmit and communicate a two-fold (and sometimes contradictory) message about *Seventeen* and its teen readership. First, she had to inform business people about the editorial mission of the magazine; then, she had to sell them on the teenage girl as a consumer – generally and specifically: as a buyer of clothing, cosmetics, food, and entertainment. In ordaining Estelle as the chief translator and allowing her considerable autonomy, Helen invited young Estelle into the process as an additional

creative influence. Ellis remembers having considerable input into the magazine's editorial direction, despite the fact that her position technically fell on the advertising side of the office:

Now, ordinarily promotion directors don't get a chance to do anything except hype a magazine, but *Helen* understood right from – and that's why she wanted me – Helen knew that if I was part, an integral part of her vision for this magazine, that I would be a translator of her ideas to businessmen who weren't reading any of these magazines and who certainly didn't, you know, have *any idea* about what this market about. So she said she wanted me to be the translator – which meant that I was an integral part of the editorial development of this magazine right from the start which was a very rare thing for anyone in promotions, cuz sometimes promotion was on one side, editorial was another, and there was a kind of a snobbery. But in this case, in Helen's case, since Helen herself came out of promotions, she recognized that what I could do for her was to articulate ... our vision.²⁶

When Estelle speaks of “our vision,” she refers to herself and Helen Valentine.

But where was Walter Annenberg's vision in the creation and promotion of *Seventeen*? Annenberg had previously articulated his own vision of *Seventeen* as a “wholesome” magazine, and one area where he had considerable input was in the arena of advertising. From the beginning, Annenberg set specific restrictions for what kinds of advertisements the magazine would accept for publication. He deemed liquor, beer and cigarette ads as unacceptable. Similarly, he nixed ads for hotel honeymoon suites and bridal gowns – both of which he thought might signal an encouragement of early marriage. He okayed cosmetics ads, but rejected hair dye, rationalizing that while makeup could be washed off (at a parent's request), dye was far more permanent. As Annenberg later explained, “To me, not having that advertising was a matter of character. And it was good business. Parents, especially

mothers, liked having their daughters reading *Seventeen*.”²⁷

Still, according to Ellis, Annenberg’s relationship to *Seventeen* actually made for a harder – and more confusing – sell to advertisers, who often couldn’t reconcile *Seventeen*’s wholesome mandate with the Annenberg family’s rather unsavory publishing reputation. The memory seems to amuse her:

[Annenberg] owned the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Racing Form*. And [advertisers] kept saying, you know, as a matter of fact, one of the funny parts was, “How can we take you seriously, you’ll put in a racing form in the middle of *Seventeen*! [laughs]”²⁸

Ultimately, however, this was somewhat of a moot point, since retailers and advertisers were much less concerned about the editorial mission of the magazine than they were about the magazine’s readership – and what that readership could do for them. Thus, Ellis’s most important sale was of teen girls as consumers.

Selling Teens as Consumers

It wasn’t enough for Ellis to establish the competency of teen girls as buyers; she had to clearly articulate their buying “preferences” so that retailers and advertisers would know how they could take advantage of this buyer bonanza. This also relates back to *Seventeen*’s focus on marketing versus merchandising. Instead of saying to retailers, “You make [name your product] and we’ll sell it to teen girls,” *Seventeen* said “Teen girls need [name the product] and if you sell it, they will come.”

According to Ellis, this consumer-focused marketing approach – a strategy that *Seventeen* took directly from the playbook of *Mademoiselle* – was particularly innovative for the time. She uses the metaphor of a “loop” to explain how it worked:

And of course, not only did I articulate it in terms of ads and mailing pieces, but I traveled the entire country from coast to coast, banging on doors, seeing not only advertising agencies and telling the story of young women, but, I was telling the story also to retailers. And making that loop which was critical since they had no business – there was no industry creating clothes or cosmetics and [Helen] knew that this was the *motherlode* of business, that if we could *persuade* industry that this was a market that they should respect, that we would get the kind of advertising that would sustain this publication, even as it was sustaining and making prosperous *Mademoiselle* with college girls. *But* the lovely loop was, how do you tell this to department stores [voice becomes loud] who do not *allow* teenagers to come into the stores because they're not, they don't see them as teenagers. So I beat a tambourine ... to let stores know that there was a market here, that they should be ... cultivating. So that just as there were college shops, then there were going to be teen shops. And there was going to be the development of teen shops. Now, once you've got retailers saying, "Hey! These are good customers that we want in our store," then advertisers wanted to be in that magazine because they wanted to influence with their product the retail store. And that was the whole, that whole little loop.²⁹

Broken down into its individual points, Ellis's loop worked like this: 1)

convince retailers that teen girls are good customers so that retailers will cater to them; 2) convince manufacturers to produce teen clothing and cosmetics to stock in the teen-speciality retail stores and departments; 3) convince advertisers to advertise those products in a magazine read by teen girls; 4) which then (and this is a point often left unstated by Ellis) advises teen girls to go out and buy those products – which convinces retailers that teens are good customers!

It is easy to see that the loop system benefited retailers, advertisers, and *Seventeen* magazine, but Ellis also claims its benefits for teens. As her previous quote indicates, she often couched her case for selling teens as consumers in terms of "respect." Thus, selling products to teen girls and constructing them as consumers would lead to the increased status of teens in a consumer-driven society as they

became more valuable to the economy. She explains further: “these young people were entitled to be respected by the retailers of this country, by the advertising agencies of this country, by the manufacturers of products!”³⁰

Ellis’s communicated her message in clear and simple terms: teens had buying “needs” that business could fill. But just who exactly were these “teens”? And what exactly did they need? *Seventeen* staffers thought they had a pretty good vision of their readership, but that amorphous understanding wasn’t enough for Helen Valentine. Valentine instructed the promotional staff to gather demographic research data to “validate and give authority to the message.”³¹ To this end, just months after the magazine hit the newsstand, *Seventeen* hired David Hertz (Helen Valentine’s son-in-law) of the Princeton, New Jersey consulting firm Benson and Benson, Inc. to survey a sample of its subscribers and their mothers in order to get a more nuanced picture of its readership. A year later, *Seventeen* hired the consulting firm, Opinion Research Corporation (ORC), also of Princeton, to compile additional survey information, this time from a national cross-section of teen-age girls, on their food consumption (shopping and eating) and preparation.³²

With demographic research in hand, Ellis had an inspiration that would shape *Seventeen*’s promotional campaign for the length of her tenure. Although the survey data offered valuable descriptive information about *Seventeen*’s readers and teen girls in general, Ellis believed that statistics alone were not illustrative enough to represent – or sell – the teen reader to business. She decided to build a promotional campaign around a *persona* – to build an embodied ideal with parts that integrated the creators’

vision, the advertisers' desire, and the readers' statistics. Thus, Estelle created "Teena, the prototypical teenage girl." Ellis describes the birth of Teena in her own words:

[...] it was a way of creating a persona for this market because people don't understand raw statistics! They understand, you know, the human story. And I always went for the human story. So by making Teena a *person*, I could define her ... it was personifying the market! [...] So, you know, you have to humanize, you have to personify. People just don't fall in love with statistics!³³

But business *would* eventually fall in love with Teena. First, though, Ellis and her staff had to develop their prototype – Teena – and then introduce her to the marketplace.

Creating "Teena, the Prototypical Teenage Girl"

Much like the biblical Adam and Eve or Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Teena was a product of her creators and she needed to embody, first and foremost, the wholesome nature that Annenberg and Valentine envisioned. In describing Teena, Ellis contrasts her creation to her modern-day successors:

She wasn't the girl that you see on the cover of teenage magazines today, who is only interested in sex and boys and face and ass. You know, I mean the whole – the point is, Teena was a whole human being! With a head, a brain, a heart, and a sense of responsibility to not only her age group, but to the world in general.³⁴

In addition, Ellis had to communicate to advertisers and retailers that Teena was not her mother. Translated into product preference, Teena needed youthful, ladylike (i.e., not sexually provocative) clothes and makeup that were geared just for her special age group. Ellis explains the dilemma that this initially created for both advertisers and the magazine staff, using the case of cosmetics as an example:

So, you know, if you go back in time, pre-44, all of the ads for cosmetics were for mothers, for their age group, and we didn't want those kinds of ads in our publication. Because, you know, it would be ... it would not be in – it would *dilute* the message and also it would be dissonant. And visually dissonant in imagery!³⁵

When some advertisers failed to understand this important distinction early on, Ellis quickly responded with a remedial booklet entitled, “Who Is Teena? Judy Jeckyll or Formalda Hyde?,” which explicitly spelled out who Teena was – and who she was *not*.³⁶ [See Figure 4, Appendix B for cover illustration]. Illustrations of two very different teen girl personas, Judy Jeckyll (*Seventeen's* editorial Teena/ideal reader) and Formalda Hyde (the advertisers' misrepresentation), accompanied the magazine's narrative about the identity mixup:

When we first saw Teena she was in high school. She was somewhere between thirteen and eighteen years of age ... she wore simple, clean-cut clothes, was a member in good standing of the soap and water set .. and she spoke to friends and family alike in what we all recognize as basic English.

Because we spoke her language too, we decided to cater to her tastes and take care of her needs through a magazine she could call her own. And we named it ---- SEVENTEEN.

But by the time SEVENTEEN appeared on the newsstands we had a feeling Teena might be leading a double life. She seemed to be one girl in our editorial pages and quite another when we leafed through our advertising – kind of a split personality.

This was particularly noticeable when our editors (women who should know the ways of women) held Teena's interest with realistic articles on politics, democracy and the post-war world, while some of our advertisers did their best to woo her with a mumbo jumbo called jive talk.

They even tried to sell her on spike heels...fussy hats ... sloppy ... sweaters, and dresses with a life-begins-at-forty look. This really had us baffled since we had repeatedly told them that Teena and her teenmates were buying up the youthful wholesome clothes featured on our editorial pages.

We became all the more confused when we remembered that Teena poked fun at glamor girls who piled on the war paint ... wore bird nest hair-do's and sprouted claw-y fingernails. Why then did smart advertisers* try to sell Teena cosmetics via over-done and all too frequently overage models?

[*only smart advertisers advertise in SEVENTEEN]

IT JUST DIDN'T MAKE DOLLARS AND SENSE

\$

No more sense than the "over-exposed" photos and drawings some of our lingerie and hosiery advertisers put in *Seventeen*. For while we'd be the first to admit our girl Teena knows all about the birds and bees, we've been around her long enough to know she's not the kind of girl you can win with "cheesecake."

We finally figured it out! It was undoubtedly a case of mistaken identity. A few of our advertisers took Teena for someone else! If that happened to you – and you would a fresh introduction write the SEVENTEEN Advertising Advisory Board, 11 W. 42nd Street, New York 18, N.Y.

P.S. We've got Teena's number ---- have you? If not, look her up in [back page] SEVENTEEN * the young girls service magazine.

Strategies of introduction

Having chastised and re-educated the business community, Ellis continued to transform the raw statistics collected on the teen reader into personal characteristics for the embodied Teena. One physical characteristic that seems to have been taken for granted, however, was Teena's race. Although ethnicity was never addressed in any of the promotional literature, all pictures and illustrations depicted Teena as white.

Ellis used several strategies and venues to introduce Teena to business. She published the survey findings in book form under the titles, *Life with Teena: A Seventeen Magazine Survey* and *Life with Teena, Volume II: Food*, distributing them

to advertisers, retailers, and manufacturers.³⁷ Both of these books translated the reader/teen girl survey results into a narrative about the prototypical Teena. The original *Life with Teena* described the average reader's vital stats, as well as her aspirations, her shopping habits, possessions, and preferences, and her relationship with *Seventeen*. In answer to the question, "Who is Teena?," Chapter 1 reveals:

Our girl Teena is sixteen years old. She's five feet four and a quarter inches tall and tips the scales at 118 pounds. She goes to a public high school, expects to graduate next year at the age of 17 and go on to college with a B.A. or B.S. in mind. Her chances of going to college are good, since Teena's mother is in favor of higher education! And her father can afford to foot all her college bills. He's a professional man ... a business man ... a white-collar worker. Teena could work her way through college if she had to ... she earns money even now, minding babies after school. And it's not just "pin money" she's working for either ... when Teena works she earns \$13.48 month – all of which she keeps for her own expenses. This, in addition to a regular family allowance – \$2.13 week. Which she spends on movies, bus fares, cokes, school supplies, lunches, candy, etc.

Reading between the lines, businessmen learn that the average reader has the number one characteristic that it takes to be a good consumer – *money*. In fact, she's doubly-blessed financially, because she has access to her own earned disposable income as well as that of her professional father. Decoded further, there are hints that she is a good long-term investment, since college attendance increases her chances to land an educated husband. Subsequent chapters reveal that Teena "is a homemaker at heart," helps others with their shopping selections, including her family members, girl friends and boy friends, and that she assists mom with domestic activities, including grocery shopping, menu planning, and meal preparation. Teena uses cosmetics, goes to the movies, and participates in athletic activities. Her favorite magazine?

Seventeen, of course! And she shares it with her mom, her sister, her friends, and even her brother!³⁸

Because *Life with Teena, Volume II: Food* included data from a national cross section of teen girls, it actually came much closer to portraying the average *teen* (as opposed to the average *reader*), while also giving businessmen an interesting contrast between the teen reader and teen girls in general. “Chapter 1: Profile of Teena,” introduced the average teen girl:

Teena is somewhere between thirteen and nineteen years of age. She lives everywhere in the USA – in big cities, in small towns, in the suburbs or on the farm. She is one of the three children in a family and is as likely to be the daughter of a professional or a proprietor as of a laborer.³⁹

A footnote compares this Teena (the average *teenager*) with the original Teena (the average *reader*), noting that the latter “is more likely to be the 16-year-old daughter of a professional, a white collar or skilled worker.” Thus, the average reader tended to be a little older and more moneyed than the average teen – an obvious selling point for the magazine. She was also more likely to be an urban/suburban resident of the East coast or the Midwest.

The Volume II narrative focuses specifically on Teena’s role as a domestic laborer. The text notes that Teena often does the grocery shopping for the family, but that she is a different kind of “shopper” from her mother:

Teen-agers have fewer brand prejudices than their mothers, due in great part to their youth, inexperience and the wartime shortage of various brands. It is evident from the foregoing breakdowns that many of the young girls questioned have not as yet chosen their brand favorites.⁴⁰

This was a particularly important point to make to grocers, but it was also

made to retailers, more generally, in other campaign discourse. Teena, *Seventeen* told business, is still impressionable and hasn't become "branded" by certain companies. The embedded logic hints that businesses could influence Teena if they reached her in time – and that the pages of *Seventeen* are where the two could meet.

Ellis also used two other important strategies of introduction: direct mailings and advertisements. For the "calling card" promotion, an example of the former, *Seventeen* mailed postcards featuring drawings and text about Teena to retailers and advertisers. For the latter strategy, *Seventeen* promoted Teena in major industry publications of that time period, including *Women's Wear Daily*, *Drug Trade News*, *Tide*, *Printer's Ink*, *Advertising Age*, *Retailing Home Furnishings*, and *Cosmetics and Toiletries*. In the following section, I use the words and images of these promotional documents to highlight the important parameters and characteristics of *Seventeen's* promotional Teena. Although the Teena of this campaign also drew on the statistics of the average reader, she had been given a makeover – one that accentuated her most marketable features (particularly as a consumer) while downplaying her less saleable characteristics (citizenship and intellectuality).

MEET TEENA

Meet Teena ...

No one thought she could read!

Once upon a time – and not so long ago – a High School Girl (we'll call her Teena) looked into the family magazine rack for something to read. She found a magazine chic enough for mother, another rugged enough for father, a third just right for brother Bill, yet nary a one for her! Teena got the sad, sad feeling that publishers didn't know she could read. Or if they did, they didn't seem to care. So she started a one-girl campaign – protested loud and strong, (she had 6,000,000 teenmates to back her up), and it wasn't long before people

were talking about Teena the High School Girl who reads ... influences the buying habits of her family ... chooses the clothes she wears, the lipstick she uses, the food she eats. Others still more farsighted thought of Teena in terms of future buying power – a career girl, a college student, a mother! The happy ending writes itself. Teena got what she wanted – her own magazine *SEVENTEEN*. If you want to talk to Teena, do it through *SEVENTEEN*.⁴¹

This ad, written in the tradition of the fairy tale, formally introduced Teena to business. Of course, as with fairy tales more generally, it was not wholly “truthful” or realistic. Instead, it contained the “truths” that its authors wanted to get across to their audience. In this fairytale, *Seventeen* resulted from the popular demand of millions of young women when, in actuality, the magazine’s birth was the direct result of decisions made at the producer level, with goals that were primarily economic.⁴² The text of this introduction foreshadows many of the discursive themes that were woven into the fabric of the Teena campaign: Teena, the high school girl who has many “teenmates”; Teena, the girl who reads – and has influence. Teena, the girl with a future – as a college student, wife and mother and, most importantly, consumer.

***Seventeen* Knows (Teena) Best**

To get the advertiser to “buy” *Seventeen*, it had to sell itself as the premier teen girl authority. A major part of the promotional campaign involved making a convincing case that *Seventeen* was the expert on Teena – and all her many millions of teen-mates.

Seventeen gets them young

We speak from authority – for we know more than 3,000,000 of these girls intimately. They read *SEVENTEEN* each month. What’s more, they believe what they read because they saw it in *SEVENTEEN*.⁴³

This advertisement succinctly articulates a foundational concept of the Teena

campaign: *Seventeen* and teen girls have a special relationship. Although other ads in the campaign make this relationship look fairly symbiotic, this ad makes clear that *Seventeen* holds the more powerful position. *Seventeen* states that it knows these “young” women “intimately” – words that reveal the girls vulnerability in the relationship. Thus, in the discourse of the promotional campaign, *Seventeen*’s position of influence over Teena is predicated upon Teena’s vulnerability as a teenager making the bumpy transition into adulthood. And *Seventeen* often marketed Teena’s vulnerability to the advertiser:

What’s buzzing in Teena’s bonnet
It’s a smart advertiser who knows!
Teena the High School Girl has a peck of problems. She’s what older folks call an awkward adolescent – too tall, too plump, too shy – a little too much of a lot of little things. But they’re *big* things to Teena. And though she doesn’t always take her troubles to mother, Teena writes her favorite magazine for the tip-off on the clothes she wears, the food she eats, the lipstick she wields, the room she bunks in, the budget she keeps, the boy she has a crush on. *Seventeen* seems to have all the answers – that’s why like Teena, smart advertisers use *Seventeen*.⁴⁴

In this ad, *Seventeen* presents itself as Teena’s mother-substitute – and then offers its progeny up as tempting bait to the highest bidder(s). In order to be economically viable, *Seventeen* had to walk a fine line between helping its readers and serving the advertiser. They attempt to smooth this tension – at least in the text – by asserting that the needs of the reader and advertiser are intertwined and that both benefit through *Seventeen*’s efforts towards integration. Sometimes, as the text from an advertising pamphlet entitled “*Seventeen* Comes to the Aid of the Advertiser” illustrates, this ability to bring reader and advertiser together is heralded as

Seventeen's higher calling:

SEVENTEEN, the young girl's service magazine, believes strongly that in helping its advertisers it is helping its readers! [...] For *SEVENTEEN* feels keenly its responsibility as a national advertising medium – a responsibility that begins with helping the teen consumer find the products “SEEN IN *SEVENTEEN*” in home towns throughout the United States.⁴⁵

The “calling card” promotion, in particular, established the close relationship between *Seventeen* and Teena. Of the nine different postcards, all carry the caption, “You Can’t Tear Her Away From *Seventeen*,” and feature drawings of Teena (by *Seventeen's* young artist, Betty Betz) in a variety of settings. In the postcards, Teena is portrayed as a young white girl with long straight brunette hair. Slender – but not skinny – she has perky round breasts and a small waist. Whenever her face is shown (sometimes it is obscured by the *Seventeen* magazine she holds), she is smiling. The accompanying copy extols the special relationship between Teena and *Seventeen*. Through the pictures and copy, we learn that Teena prefers reading *Seventeen* to almost all other activities – including dating. On one postcard, Teena reads the magazine while ignoring three male suitors who look on; on another, Teena reads the magazine while at a school dance. *Seventeen* also accompanies her in other activities, including playing in the orchestra, bathing in the tub, and walking in her graduation procession. Often, she is so engrossed in it that she puts herself in danger. In one picture, Teena is reading *Seventeen* while snow skiing and she is so mesmerized that she is about to collide with a tree.

Read literally, this is a pretty powerful relationship: Teena is so enamored by *Seventeen* that she becomes oblivious to all else – even romance and danger (more

cynical souls might describe these as one and the same). In order for the sales transaction between *Seventeen* and the advertiser to be finalized, however, the mere establishment of a relationship between magazine and reader is insufficient. *Seventeen* had to convince the advertiser that the magazine *influenced* Teena and her millions of teen-mates. *Seventeen* makes this point in text from the calling card campaign:

– she only has eyes for her favorite magazine. And there are 850,000 others just like her – high school girls who use *Seventeen* as their shopping guide; high school girls who check the magazine’s editorial and advertising papers before they buy.⁴⁶

The crucial sales point is that Teena looks to the entire magazine – both editorial and advertising copy – for advice and direction. This point is so important that *Seventeen* often uses actual sales data to support its assertions. For instance, a calling card exhorts the advertiser: “But don’t take our word for it! Ask Harvey’s of Nashville. Their two column, \$625 insertion drew 36,000 inquiries”⁴⁷ and a print ad exclaims: “Confidentially ... We’ve got pull – but do tell everybody. Our December cover sold 2500 teen-age evening gowns.”⁴⁸

Constructing Teena as an Uber-Consumer

A 1945 article about *Seventeen* in the industry publication, *Tide*, indicated that Ellis’s sales job was not an easy one – at least initially: “[Seventeen’s] reader market, the teen-age girl, was regarded by many advertisers as a dubious, if personable, purchasing agent.”⁴⁹ Ellis had to convince the business world that Teena had what it took to be a consumer. The campaign illustrated four important characteristics that

made Teena a good buy/er, which I identify as: “Teena Has Money,” “Teena Is Young,” “Teena Is Influential” and “Teena Needs A Boy.”

Teena Has Money

Ellis made incredibly quick headway in her campaign; just two years after the Tide article described the teen girl as a “dubious ... purchasing agent,” *Advertising Age* proclaimed her the advertising industry’s new “pin-up girl.”⁵⁰ *Seventeen* helped Teena achieve this status by highlighting her value and ability as a consumer extraordinaire. One of the crucial points that they had to communicate about Teena was that she had access to money. The following print ad describes the source of her money – and how she spends it:

Teena goes to town
to buy a new dress to wear back to school; to look for a radio to play in her room; to market for groceries to help mother out; to get a new lipstick to build up morale. For Teena the high school girl has money of her own to spend – money enough for movies, sodas, records and clothes. And what her allowance and pin-money earnings won’t buy, her parents can be counted on to supply. For our girl Teena won’t take no for an answer when she sees what she wants in *Seventeen*.⁵¹

Seventeen establishes several points in this text. First and foremost – Teena has money that she’s ready and willing to spend. In accordance with the findings of the reader surveys, the text depicts Teena as possessing her *own* money, whether “earned” through outside labor (e.g., babysitting, after-school job) or through home labor (her allowance). The latter source reminds us of Teena’s economic dependency on her parents. However, at least in this context, Teena is described as a strong-willed – perhaps even rebellious – girl who will get the extra money she needs from

her parents as necessary. Of course, this also presumes that Teena belongs to a family that has the financial resources to fund her buying – but this *was* often the case, according to *Seventeen's* survey data.

Seventeen also uses this text to describe the kinds of products that Teena is in the market for: clothes, electronics, cosmetics, and entertainment. They are informing advertisers that Teena has many interests and can't be pegged into just one buying slot – and this diversity of consumptive possibilities certainly broadens her value as a buyer. One buying arena that Teena is shown frequenting is the grocery store:

Teena goes to market ... are you on her shopping list?
Teena the high school girl is a homemaker at heart! When school is out you will find her trotting down to the neighborhood market to bring home the bacon – shopping for the groceries her family needs. A girl with grown-up responsibilities, Teena fixes supper when mother wants a stand-in. She plans the menu and prepares the food when it's her turn to entertain the gang. A big help around the house, Teena knows how to cook, clean, sew and shop. A peek into her market basket proves she knows her groceries too. If you want your product included in that basket, you'd do well to tell her about it in the magazine she reads and believes – *Seventeen*.⁵²

Teena, as a housewife in training, practices her skills at home and on her friends. In a strategy that does not exist in the marketing of contemporary *Seventeen*, the magazine puts a lot of effort into wooing grocers and food manufacturers to become suitors of Teena. When Teena is described as “bring[ing] home the bacon” in this context, the allusion is clearly to domestic labor and not to workforce labor.

The demographic information revealed that most of the readers were from middle-income families. *Seventeen* uses this middle-class status as a selling point, as

the following print advertisement illustrates:

Teena wasn't born with a silver spoon in her mouth
...chances are she doesn't have "Grandmother's silver" to inherit! Reason
enough fourteen of the nation's top silver companies are selling Teena their
patterns and their names in *SEVENTEEN* each month. Buying for herself
today and a family of her own tomorrow, Teena (there are 7,999,999 more at
home just like her) is the nation's most potent consumer. Industry is reaching
her in the magazine that keeps pace with each new generation of teens.⁵³

Seventeen is creatively suggesting to the advertiser that *not* being wealthy can
actually make Teena a better buyer. It also suggests – and this is a mantra that gets
recited in a majority of advertisements – that there are millions of girls *just like*
Teena. The only change that takes place in this recitation is in the number of millions
proclaimed, a number that increases in relation to the magazine's readership. This is
a key point in the discourse of the campaign; Teena isn't just one person, one model,
one icon: she represents millions and millions of real flesh and blood American
teenage girls.

Teena is Young

The previous advertisement described Teena as a "potent consumer" – a term
which conjures up the kind of fertility that is associated with *young bodies*.
According to the promotional literature, another facet of Teena that makes her a good
consumer are the physical characteristics of youth. An ad that features two young
women exuberantly running across a field (attired in frocks) is accompanied by copy
that reads:

The Age of Action
Teen-age – that time in a lifetime when you run after the things you want!
Teens need more because they do more ... want more because they see more ...

get more because they have the stamina of youth. Their vitality can be industry's inspiration – it inspired a vital magazine! *Seventeen*.⁵⁴

The verbs describing teens in this passage are all extremely active: run, do, want, need, see, get! According to this ad, nothing can deter a teen from the physically challenging activity of consumption. *Seventeen* constructed teens – and especially teen girls – as being specially suited for power shopping.

All that youthful energy needs to be directed, however, and that is where *Seventeen* and the advertiser come in. The advertiser (via *Seventeen*), is charged with the task of educating Teena on the ABC's of buying – of filling her mind with buying knowledge. For as the headline of one advertisement provocatively states: “*Seventeen* Sells You a Blank Page.”⁵⁵ The double meaning is clear: *Seventeen* is selling “space” – in both the pages of the magazine and the mind of the reader. According to *Seventeen*, however, Teena *knows* she needs help and welcomes the assistance:

Teena is a good listener...

Tell her your sales story!

Teena the high school girl has a mind of her own – but it's open to suggestions. Shopping without mother for the first time, our girl Teena has her ears cupped for information and help. She's attentive, receptive – to new ideas, new products and new names. At a fast-growing fashion-conscious age, Teena and her teen-mates comprise a market 7,000,000 strong – a market that is strong in its buying power and positive in its brand preferences. The labels that Teena looks for today are the labels she'll remember and reach for tomorrow. To make her aware of your brand name and your label, sell her on your product now in – *Seventeen*.⁵⁶

Threads of other discourses in the promotion show up again, especially those that suggest the tension between the independence/dependence of the teenage years.

Teena has a mind of her own ... but she must fill it with the input of others. She doesn't need mother anymore – but she needs *Seventeen* (and its advertisers). She is one ... in a million. For the advertisers, Teena's youth also holds the promise of a lucrative adulthood. So, much like a young calf on the loose, Teena needs to be “branded” now, so that she isn't lost in the future. *Seventeen* makes this point even more overtly in the following ad, which shows Teena holding a crystal ball:

Look Ahead With Teena

She's a girl with a future!

You don't have to be a crystal gazer to know that Teena the High School girl is within a few years of a job ... a husband ... a home of her own. Open-minded, impressionable, at an age when she's interested in anything new, Teena is a girl well worth knowing – surely worth cultivating. The lipstick that satisfies her now is the one you'll find in her purse when she's old enough to “remember when.” The brand names she's made conscious of today are the ones she'll cling to – and trust – tomorrow. It's easier to sell Teena in her teens than to unsell her when she's 21-plus. Teena the girl with a future can be your future too, if you sell her in the magazine she and her teen-mates beg, borrow and buy – *Seventeen*.⁵⁷

Business is told that Teena, like a fertile soil, needs “cultivation” (a word that Ellis continues to use in later interviews). They're also reminded that this kind of toil takes work – but that the teen girl territory is “worth” the effort. Seeds sown in the teen years will reap a future adult consumer harvest.

Teena is Influential

The chain of consumption does not end once Teena has been influenced by *Seventeen* and branded by the advertiser. In fact, this is the point at which Teena becomes most valuable in the entire process as her role shifts from follower to leader – from influenced to influential:

Teena is a Copycat

– what a break for you!

Our girl Teena (unlike her older sister) wants to look, act and be just like the girl next door. She and her teen-mates speak the same language ... wear the same clothes ... eat the same foods ... use the same brand of lipstick ... go in for the same gimmicks ... and lately even read the same magazine (*Seventeen*, of course!). For Teena and her teen-mates come in bunches – like bananas. You'll see them shopping together, sipping Cokes at the corner candy store together, going to movies, market and club meetings together. Sell one and chances are you'll sell them all – all 6,000,000 of them – especially when you sell them in the magazine they're sold on ...

Seventeen.⁵⁸

One of the purposes of this ad is to establish that Teena as a high school girl is a completely different person (i.e., market segment) than “her older sister.” By “older sister,” *Seventeen* is making reference to college-age women – and the emerging genre of magazines marketed to them (e.g., *Mademoiselle*). Because *Seventeen* was competing head-to-head for advertising with other fashion magazines, it had to establish both its readership and itself as distinct entities in the publishing world so that advertisers would see that they could only “reach” the teenage buyer via *Seventeen*.

This advertisement also establishes the unique value of Teena and the teenage girl as consumer: they're “copycats.” This means that an advertiser only has to really “sell” one Teena on a product in order to reap the benefits of selling the whole group. Thus, although the majority of teen girls are represented as followers in this ad, one of them is depicted as highly influential. It's impossible to discern whether this “copycat” characteristic represents a “real” phenomenon of youth or a self-fulfilling prophesy; nevertheless, it was a part of the cultural lore of the time period, as this

quote from a 1946 article in *Business Week* illustrates:

[...] the teen-age market – a special area that has come into its own during the war. It's a jackpot market, because, unlike her older sisters, every teen-ager wants to look almost exactly like every other teen-ager [...].⁵⁹

The portrayal of teenage girls as followers actually conflicts with descriptions of Teena as independent and strong-willed in other advertisements in this promotion, but it was a most important point to make to the advertiser. Selling Teena to the advertiser became much easier if the advertiser thought that she was an “exponential” purchase. Because of this, all teen girls (even the followers) are represented as influential of others:

Take Time Out for Teena...

She's a girl with influence

Teena the High School girl is a power in the home. It doesn't matter who in her family you're out to sell, you can't afford to overlook the tastes or preferences of our girl Teena. She's the determining factor in many a family decision. It's because of her that mother is re-doing the living room ... that father is thinking seriously of added insurance, a new car, and a post-war home of their own. And you may be sure that when the buying is done Teena will influence style and brand choice. For Teena has a mind of her own. She's not likely to be satisfied merely because it was good enough for mother. So if you're out to sell Teena and her 700,000 teen-mates, do it in the magazine they read and believe –
Seventeen.⁶⁰

The accompanying picture depicts Teena holding a lariat that has captured her parents. The object of branding – a symbolic cow – becomes the lead “cowgirl” in the family. Teena finds her power in this role. In the wild, wild world of shopping, she – not her father – is the real family leader. Thanks to the education she has received from *Seventeen* and its advertisers, she has become a savvy consumer and the usual familial roles flip-flop as her parents seek her advice on what to buy. And, as the

next advertisement makes clear, Teena's influence in the buying arena knows no bounds:

Bank on Teena
the high school girl –
to get her family to take a trip ...
To persuade her father they need a new car ...
To convince her mother they can't live without new living-room furniture...
To sell her teen-mates on the record, the blazer, the candy bar or lipstick she bought for herself. For our girl Teena has a way with her friends and her family. Persuasive ... persistent, she knows how to get what she wants. And you can make her want the product you sell if you tell her about it in the magazine she reads and believes –
Seventeen.⁶¹

One gets the feeling that when Richard Adler and Jerry Ross were writing the lyrics for "Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets," the memorable tune from the Broadway musical, *Damn Yankees*, they were thinking of our Teena. It seems that "Whatever Teena wants, Teena gets" – for herself, and even for others. Of course, in the heterosexual world in which our Teena lives, there is one significant person who has been glaringly absent thus far – but he's an important component in her buying cycle.

Teena Needs a Boy

Girl meets Boy
– and they're going to the movies
[...]
Characters: 8,000,000 teen-age girls and the boys they influence
Story: Girl meets boy ... boy dates girl ... girl gets boy to take her to the movies
Plot Development: This is where you come in! You write the happy ending when you sell the girl who sells the boy on more movies – on your movies in particular.⁶²

Once Teena has lassoed herself a boy, her influence extends into a new arena – the date. In the story that *Seventeen* tells, Teena, at first glance, appears to reign as

queen of this kingdom, too. On the surface, she has the power to direct the date by “get[ting]” the boy to do her bidding (in this case, take her to a particular movie). However, read more closely, her power is superficial. Teena may get her way, but her ideas and desires are not her own – they have been fed to her by the advertiser through *Seventeen*. Even her relationship with “the boy” lacks her real influence, as another “Girl Meets Boy” ad reveals:

Girl meets Boy

– and it’s only the beginning! There’s nothing like the start of a beautiful friendship to start a girl on a buying spree ... to start her thinking of the cosmetics and toiletries that will improve her looks. A girl meets a boy and she reaches for a lipstick, she fusses with her hair and she pressures her parents for mascara, for perfume, for a dressing table of her own. She motivates and initiates buying in the millions [...].⁶³

It is really the boy who is the more “influential” component in this duo; he – albeit indirectly – influences Teena to go on a “buying spree.” From the advertiser’s standpoint, the boy (or heterosexual romance, more generally) is just a catalyst for more buying – and an opportunity for continued influence of Teena. He is an important link that transforms the consumptive process from linear to circular (a loop, in fact, much like the one that Estelle Ellis touts): Teena goes to *Seventeen* for direction, the advertiser influences her to buy, she influences others to buy – and then a boy makes her feel inadequate, which sends her running back to *Seventeen*. As other scholars have noted, consumer behavior is predicated on creating a feeling of inadequacy in the buyer.⁶⁴ The “logic” of advertising necessitates that the tension created by this feeling of inadequacy can only be reduced through the consumption of products. Thus, heterosexual romance played an integral part in the selling of Teena

to the advertiser – but as a part of the process, and not as the primary goal. In the case of creation of Teena, as the prototypical teenage girl, heterosexual gender socialization took a back seat to the primary goal of consumer socialization.⁶⁵

CONCLUSION

Once upon a time, Estelle Ellis and *Seventeen* magazine introduced advertisers to “Teena, the Prototypical Teenage Girl.” As a result of the magazine’s matchmaking efforts, advertisers learned all about Teena, including that she was quite a shopper – and a young woman of influence. They also learned that they could influence her to buy their products. Their courtship took off – but how did their relationship progress? In celebration of its fifth birthday in 1949, *Seventeen* published this print ad, a retrospective birthday card in praise of both Teena and the advertiser:

You Can’t Blow Away 5 Years!

Sixty Issues Later...

- Fashion manufacturers are creating clothes styled and patterned exclusively for the teen-age girl
- Retailers are expanding teen shops, hiring advisors, organizing high school boards, planning ads, windows and department displays to attract Teena and her friends to every department in a store
- Cosmetic and toiletries companies are packaging special products for the teen consumer ... are selling their sales staff on the importance of catering to the adolescent [...]

Sixty Issues Later...

Seventeen, the magazine that first fell in love with Teena, knows she has captivated industry as well ... is proud to have been chosen by industry to sell the nation’s 8,000,000 teen-age girls.⁶⁶

Five years after Estelle Ellis and *Seventeen* introduced Teena to business, real transformation was taking place in the economy, as retailers and merchandisers

rushed to meet the consumer “needs” of the teenage girl. The promotion Teena who they met and to whom they responded, Ellis’s prototypical teen-age girl, differed from editorial Teena in ways not completely contradictory, but of proportion. Editorial Teena was based on Helen Valentine’s conceptualization of teen girls as “whole human beings,” readers of a magazine intended for their edification and education. This original vision represented ideal Teena as a multi-dimensional girl: one who balanced beautification and romance with citizenship and intellectual pursuits. On the other hand, the promotion campaign’s Teena prototype needed to attract a very different audience – businessmen and advertisers. This constituency’s interest in teen girls laid completely in their potential as consumers; whether these same girls were active citizens or community activists mattered not to business – unless it could be mined for profit. Thus, Ellis’s Teena was a reductive ideal, often reflecting a teen girl obsessed with beauty, boys, fashion and domesticity – and most especially with shopping for the products associated with those pursuits.

In particular, the construction of promotion Teena as a future stay-at-home housewife reflected *Seventeen’s* bow to the reported aspiration of its readership and to the desire of domestic advertisers, and certainly did not reflect Valentine’s original vision. Indeed, editor-in-chief Valentine, promotion director Ellis, and nearly every other woman staffer were wives and mothers who worked outside the home. However, the editorial staffs’ personal beliefs and editorial concerns were superceded out of necessity by economic decisions.⁶⁷ In this case, it was more important to introduce domestic goods retailers and manufacturers to a readership that both

engaged in present-day domestic consumption and dreamed of future domestic bliss. Read more broadly, Teena wasn't just going to the market, she was going on the market – as a commodity herself.

It can, at first glance, appear somewhat counterintuitive that a young working class girl from Brooklyn held the influential position of primary matchmaker between moneyed businessmen and middle/upper class teen girls. Indeed, the teen-age girl ideal that Estelle Ellis created and communicated through the persona of Teena, differed fairly dramatically from her own experience, particularly in regard to social class and gender roles. Certainly, Estelle wasn't the progeny of a professional father with deep pockets to pick, she couldn't possibly have been described as a “homemaker at heart,” and as a financially independent businesswoman for her entire adult life, her “need” for a boy was never economic. However, the Teena campaign that sprang from Estelle's creative mind was based on a feminine ideal that pre-dated *Seventeen*, one that permeated western society, and that socialization imprinted on every citizen – Estelle included. Thus, Estelle didn't create a new reverence for feminine youth, beauty, domesticity, whiteness and wealth; she just compiled these already revered characteristics into a teen-age girl prototype and then sold Teena, her teen-mates, and *Seventeen* in a marketplace that immediately recognized their value.

CHAPTER 5

“Teena Means Business”:

***Seventeen’s* Advertisers Court, Counsel, and Construct the Teen Girl Consumer**

Teena means business

Don’t pass her by!

You can’t afford to overlook the high school girl. She’s buying for herself today...

she’ll be buying for a family of her own tomorrow. She’s in the market for clothes she can wear, cosmetics she can use and food she can bring home for mother. And you may be sure the products she’s buying in her teens are the ones you’ll find on her bathroom and pantry shelves when she’s set in her ways. She’s an important girl and bound to be quite a woman. Sell her now – for now and the future – in the magazine she reads and believes – *seventeen* [*Seventeen* promotional literature]¹

Baby cannot live on bread alone.

If subscriptions and newsstand sales were the bread and butter of *Seventeen’s* existence, advertising was its mother’s milk. This wasn’t unique to *Seventeen*, of course; it has been and continues to be an economic reality for most mainstream magazines, and particularly so for women’s fashion magazines, with their symbiotic relationship with the fashion and beauty industries.² Advertisers – not readers – held the key to *Seventeen’s* economic survival, making Estelle Ellis’s position as Promotional Director one of the most important at the fledgling magazine. Young Estelle proved to be a consummate promoter and communicator, her message of *Seventeen’s* privileged relationship with the newly-identified teen girl consumer apparently heard loud and clear by the business community, who came bearing gifts of advertising revenue to the newborn magazine.

As *Seventeen* grew, so too did its advertising, proportionally. [See Table 2,

Appendix C]. In its infancy, the magazine's pages were almost evenly split between editorial copy and advertising copy. By the end of the first year, however, this ratio had changed to about 45/55 – i.e., 45% of space devoted to editorial content, and 55% to advertisements. Advertising that appeared in *Seventeen* generally fell into seven different product categories:

“Body Wear” (clothing, undergarments, shoes, accessories, jewelry)

“Body Care” (cosmetics, grooming, feminine hygiene, and medicine)

“Entertainment” (movies and records)

“Education/Employment” (correspondence courses, vo/techs, colleges);

“Snacks” (sodas and candy)

“Miscellaneous” (pens, paper, wallets)

“Domestic” (linens, cookbooks, hope chests, sterling silver)

Seventeen's advertisers brought more than revenue to the magazine and they sold more than products to the teen girl. As major contributors to *Seventeen's* overall discourse, they joined the editorial staff in constructing and solidifying the theretofore ephemeral feminine teen ideal, offering the readers pictures to emulate, advice to follow, and a peek into the future of an ideal “womanhood.” Interestingly, while some elements of what constituted ideal femininity remained constant across time, other elements emerged and/or disappeared as the war waxed and waned.

ADVERTISING DURING THE WAR

The presence of World War II permeated *Seventeen's* pages during its first year of publication, including its advertising. Although adopted as a practice by only

a minority of advertisers, every issue during this time period contained advertisements that referenced war or contained “signs” of it. The most ubiquitous of these were the tiny war slogans tucked away in the corners of ads for clothing, cosmetics, and colas. Most often, they referred to war bonds and implored the reader to: “Back the Attack with War Bonds!” “Buy More War Bonds,” and “Hold Those Bonds!” Other advertisers warned against waste – of resources or words. Soap makers Lux and Swan cajoled the reader to not waste soap – “for soap contains material vital to the war effort.”³ Flame-Glo Lipstick warned the reader to “Seal your lips – You can talk about love, but Uncle Sam asks that you keep military secrets to yourself!”⁴ These ideological missives represented an overt example of the war-time *ménage à trois* between Madison Avenue, the U. S. Government and mainstream magazines, in which this triad worked together to support America's war effort.⁵

Some manufacturers used their ads to apologize for the scarcity of their products and plead for patience from the reader/consumer. These appeals, made by makers of blouses, sweaters, girdles, linens, Kleenex tissues, and cosmetic cases, resulted from the U. S. government's control over certain resources deemed essential to the war effort. Because of their usefulness as war materials, silk, wool, synthetics, rubber, paper, and certain metals were either completely removed from the public sector or strictly rationed.⁶ Some advertisers sold “waiting” as a virtue, something that women consumers could do in service to their country. Featherknit sweaters, for instance, encouraged patriotic patience:

We hope to resume production of Featherknits for you soon, but Featherknits

are now being made exclusively for G. I. Joe. Lucky gals may still find some F's at their favorite shops. Plucky gals will be glad to wait for Victory, when Featherknit Sweaters will be even more glamorous than ever.⁷

Like Featherknit, many manufacturers asked the reader/consumer to be patient now while imagining an abundant future. According to this appeal, victory would not just bring war's end, but also the beginning of a postwar spending spree.⁸ Advertisers who meshed the ideals of patience (now) and spending (later) were actually building an ideological bridge between the two consumer-citizen ideals of the time period: the war-time Citizen Consumer, upholding the "general good" through consumer sacrifice, and the postwar Purchaser as Citizen, upholding the "general good" through consumer spending.⁹

Waiting for the future, however, was hard for manufacturers – perhaps most especially for girdle makers, whose wares were mainly composed of those materials that were among the most strictly restricted and co-opted by the government for military use. Foundation maker Jantzen took a very interesting tack in addressing this problem of limited resources, placing a patriotic mandate on women's bodies as a part of the body politic. As they vehemently exhorted the reader:

Your hips are everybody's business! Your figure has become a matter of national importance! The slimmer you are, the less fabric required to girdle you, the more slimming, trimming, smoothing, soothing Jantzen foundations can be turned out into the world. So do get out and do active things like walking, dancing, digging, swimming – it's a lot of fun and it's slimming.¹⁰

Although some companies sold the war or wartime virtue alongside their products, most merely used the war as a kind of advertising backdrop by placing signs of it into their pictures. Several clothing advertisers posed their teen models

with warplanes or weapons. The Peggy Paige dress company created one of the strangest pairings, positioning two young women in front of the Bofors Gun, declaring both girls and gun to be “America’s Secret Weapon.”¹¹ Other advertisers, including Judy Kent blouses (a teen clothing company) and Dr. Pepper, showed young civilian women fraternizing with armed forces men at U.S.O. clubs.¹² This setting alluded to the most common way that advertisers signaled the war in their ads: through the inclusion of servicemen as signs (and reminders) of heterosexual romance.

Ads that included military men valorized a particular form of masculinity – aggressive, muscular, dominating, and dominant.¹³ Visually displaying the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, these soldiers and sailors often functioned as a materialized “male gaze,” assessing young women from a distance.¹⁴ For instance, an ad for Joan Lord fashions shows a sailor on a ship looking through binoculars at a young woman on shore.¹⁵ In a similar ad for Heart Throb Fashions, a soldier signals his approval for a young woman (and her attire) with a wolf-whistle.¹⁶ Sometimes the gaze became much more intimate; many ads featured servicemen and young civilian women looking adoringly into each other’s eyes. Ads for Keepsake Diamond Rings – in almost every issue – took this familiar story of (service)boy meets girl to its logical end, portraying soldiers and their adult women girlfriends in loving embrace, with captions that proclaimed, “Together again! Joyously greeting a bright tomorrow ... your love and hers forever sealed with the traditional symbol of the engagement!”¹⁷

War-time ads featuring service men and young civilian women differed only superficially from the usual non-wartime ads that appealed to romance and male approval to sell a product. The military men portrayed in these war era ads “served” as the token representatives of heterosexual romance. As Ken dolls dressed up as G. I. Joe’s, only their clothes had changed; at their essence, they still functioned as Barbie’s male counterpart. On the other hand, a war-influenced discursive pattern does emerge in the ads for the war period: the importance of “daintiness.”

During *Seventeen*’s first year, 17 companies placed 24 advertisements that mentioned “daintiness”; 15 of these ads targeted women generally, 9 spoke to teens specifically. Advertisers who sold daintiness along with their product fell into the following categories: clothing, foundations, feminine hygiene, deodorants, cleansers, and cosmetics.¹⁸ For the most part, these advertisers advised girls to maintain their “daintiness” by wearing clothing and undergarments that accentuated (and/or controlled) female body shape and by keeping that body in a state of “wholesome” cleanliness that belied physical reality. For them, a “dainty” body was a body free of natural scents, whether the result of physical activity (i.e., sweat) or biological function (i.e., menstruation). Nonspi deodorant spoke directly to teen girls about the relationship of “daintiness” to an “active” social life:

[...] Personal daintiness is always essential to popularity. Teen-agers with their natural interest in dances and parties, must be fastidious in their grooming. Frequent participation in active sports and strenuous dancing demands a good anti-perspirant to avoid offending. Dependable perspiration control will prevent much unhappiness and embarrassment for teen-agers as well as their mothers and older sisters.¹⁹

Accompanying many of these ads – directly and subtly – was the dire warning that a loss of daintiness would lead to a loss of male approval and partnership. A Lux lingerie soap ad, featuring a young woman in an embrace with a uniformed suitor, captures the tone of these ads, warning:

Romance in the air ... Don't let undie odor rob you of your share! Romance comes when you seem truly precious and wonderful in his eyes. Even a hint of perspiration odor may break that magic spell. Of course underthings absorb perspiration and others notice this odor long before we do ourselves. Play safe with daintiness – Lux lingerie after *every* wearing.²⁰

One has to wonder how odoriferous one's undies would have to be in order to offend the olfactory sensibilities of those in less than incredibly intimate proximity. According to Lux, however, "undie odor," loomed as a threat to both daintiness and romance. Mavis Talcum powder made the relationship between the two a simple equation, vehemently stating: "To the dainty belong the men!"²¹

Obviously, the daintiness discourse was highly gendered, the word itself a gender-loaded adjective.²² When describing women, it connotes the kind of ultra-femininity highly admired in a patriarchal culture. Through a masculinist lens, a dainty woman is a delicate creature, ladylike in an almost ethereal way. Used to describe men, however, it becomes a pejorative term, one assigned to those failing in their gender role behavior. A man accused of being "dainty" is behaving in ways "prissy" and "mincing." In addition, "dainty" denotes a lack of weight and substance, its antonyms include words like "heavy" and "substantial." Thus, dainty women carry little weight, take up little space, have little substance.²³

The advertisers' "dainty" discourse during the war period may not have

emerged as a coincidence, but instead as a reaction (or correction) to WWII American women's movement into areas previously the bastions of men – for instance, as factory workers and as heads of households. Certainly retrospectively, the “daintiness” discourse reads as an attempt to police and control women's femininity amidst the blurred gender roles of war. However, once the war ended and servicemen returned to take back their positions at work and home, the daintiness discourse dissipated and later disappeared.²⁴

Advertisers as Teachers: Lessons in Body Management

While all advertisers tried to sell their products and their worldview to *Seventeen's* readership, some advertisers benefited from being part of a “mass” presence. In particular, Body Wear and Body Care products spatially, visually, and discursively dominated *Seventeen's* advertising pages during its first year [see Table 2, Appendix C]. Ads for products in the categories of Entertainment, Education/Employment, Miscellaneous, and Snacks, made up a minuscule percentage of the overall advertising, with ads for Domestic items, the least frequent type of advertisement during the first year, almost nonexistent. In addition, ads for products in the two Body categories grew fairly steadily over this time period, indicating their robust monopolization of advertising space. In addition, Body Wear and Body Care ads didn't just dominate the magazine's commercial space in number, but also in prestige, occupying the most influential locations within the magazine's layout and displaying their wares with full-page color portraits.²⁵ Because of this, they demanded more attention from the reader. Although both types of ads focused on

body management, they often diverged in their approach to the teen reader, offering a discursive example of the differing levels of recognition accorded teenage girls as a consumer niche during this time period.

Body Care Advertising: Giving Advice on the Feminine Body Ideal

The prominent advertisers for Body Care products during *Seventeen's* first year included cosmetics companies that still enjoy contemporary success and recognition, such as pow(d)erhouses Revlon, Maybelline, Helena Rubinstein, and Elizabeth Arden, as well as companies that have faded from the forefront or which no longer exist, such as Vidafilm, Overglo, Woodbury, Chen Yu, Dana, and Yardley of London. Other frequent advertisers included Lustre-Creme and Drene Shampoos, Lux and Swan Soaps, Arrid Deodorant and Kotex Sanitary Products (the most ubiquitous advertiser, with ads in every issue).

For the most part, and especially in *Seventeen's* earliest issues, a majority of Body Care advertisements approached the teen readership as if they were their mothers – or at least their older sisters. None of the Body Care ads for the magazine's first issue specifically mentioned teen girls. These advertisers ignored – or were ignorant of – the special category being carved out for teen girls as consumers. Instead, the early period Body Care advertisements often featured adult women selling adult products. One strategy commonly used in these more adult ads was the celebrity testimonial. Overglo cosmetics, for instance, featured a parade of celebrity spokeswomen in their ads, including Joan Leslie, Anne Baxter, Claudette Colbert, Dorothy McGuire, Rosalind Russell, Betty Grable, and Dorothy Lamour. These ads

extolled Overglo's ability to give its users "youthful radiance" – a somewhat illogical appeal to *Seventeen*'s readership, most of whom already possessed youth and didn't need to purchase it. Maybelline cosmetics, Woodbury Powder, Lux Soap, Arrid Deodorant, and Spellbound Perfume also used adult women celebrities in their ads, while Maybelline, Lux Soap, LeSonier Powder Mitt, Irresistible Lipstick, and DuBarry Cosmetics featured adult women brides, accompanied by text that linked the use of the product with the potential for marriage.

Although the use of adult celebrities and brides to sell products to teen girls made for a somewhat incongruous consumer fit, other Body Care ads completely departed from *Seventeen*'s "wholesome" editorial mandate. Perfume ads, for instance, frequently focused on desire and sexuality; among these, Violet Sec Fragrances offers an exemplar. A full-page ad for the perfume in the April 1945 issue of *Seventeen* (on page 6 – prime advertising real estate) featured a shadowy drawing of a platinum blond woman in a cocktail dress and long black evening gloves, sitting with a sparkling martini by her side. The woman gazes out into the shadows, seemingly on the hunt, and the caption hints of her prey, declaring "Violet Sec's Appeal" – the "fragrance that turns a man's fancy."

Lipstick ads also used this appeal to sexuality. Ponds Lipstick, for instance, ran a comic-format series that featured buxom women locking lips with men in kissing marathons that lasted from 24 hours to – in one instance – several months. Although the characters and the locales changed, the storyline and the women's beyond-ample chest size remained constant. Another cosmetics company, Dana,

used adult sexuality to promote their Tabu lipstick. Their August 1945 page 10 ad (again, a prime location) featured an adult model with dark red lips and nails, wearing a low-cut dress pinned with a large bow at her chest, each loop accentuating the breast beneath it. The model lounges on a shag rug, a pensive look on her face, against a background of a fantasy jungle motif. The text beneath her reads: "Dana has translated the sultry charm of TABU into the five most enchanting reds lips have ever worn. And TABU lipstick is so laden with TABU perfume, your lips wear the 'forbidden' fragrance all the while."

Using adult celebrities, marriage, and sex to sell cosmetics to teenage girls made for an awkward fit with the average teen reader, the Teena ideal, and the magazine's editorial message. A few Body Care advertisers, however, "recognized" the new teen market from the beginning. among them Yardley of London, a brand that would become a major player in youth commodity culture in the psychedelic 60's. In Yardley's ads, drawings of teen girls accompanied text that spoke to the readership directly, in a manner that mirrored the magazine's own conversational style. One ad, for example, featured a young girl practicing her lines for a play, the heading proclaiming her to be a "Stand-Out at Try-Outs." The text addresses the reader personally, communicating to her that Yardley understands the importance of being "yourself" (i.e, a teen/individual) and highlights the good fit between "you" and Yardley:

Fun to find yourself in a part that really fits...
Playing you to perfection, on stage and off!
That's the joy of Yardley make-up...

It's just right for your role.²⁶

Unlike many of their competitors, Yardley understood the relevance of the emerging teenage “role” and the importance of an appropriate match between product and consumer. As opposed to the heavily made-up vixens of other make-up ads, Yardley advertised their knowledge that Teena (and, thus, their product) should be “vivacious, young, never overstated.”²⁷

Other savvy cosmetics companies targeted a teen's “youthful” skin, constructing it as unique and in need of a special regimen. Rose Laird, in particular, pitched their “Protective Makeup Film” as a cure for the adolescent skin scourge, acne. Cosmetic companies Tone and Elizabeth Arden educated the reader in the vital importance of starting skin care while young, the latter emphatically instructing in one full page ad:

Build your beauty on your youth! Start while you're young to establish a habit of beauty that will remain bright and shining through the years ... don't take for granted that fresh blossom of girlhood ... resolve to make it last ... so in maturity your mirror will reflect a lovelier you. Begin now with Elizabeth Arden's routine for youth ... keep your skin scrupulously clean, braced, supple, use makeup keyed to your life and your looks ... the investment of a little care now will bring you tremendous dividends in years to come.²⁸

Of course, although the Arden ad communicated concern for the *reader's* “years to come,” it is far more likely that the real concern was for the *company's* “years to come” – and in creating a lifelong relationship with the female teen consumer.²⁹

Body Care advertiser Kotex also spoke specifically to teen girls. In a very interesting advertising campaign, Kotex marketed its sanitary napkins in the form of a

quiz, a format that teen girls love and one that has survived and flourished in the editorial pages of teen magazines from *Seventeen's* inception through today. Asking the reader, "Are You In The Know?" Kotex shared information and advice on an incredible range of subjects, none of which was hygiene related or had anything to do with their product. Instead, through their choice of topics, Kotex constructed parameters of the "typical" teen life and concerns, while using their answers to communicate (their construction of) the emerging teen girl "ideal." Thus, the reader "learned" from the Kotex ads that, among a myriad of other things, it was important to know how to: match clothes and body type; be a junior hostess; care for hands and brows; keep jewelry from tarnishing; get exercise; catch the attention of a boy; play tennis; and end a date ("with a thank you" since "reserve is becoming").³⁰ Deeply embedded within the quiz answers was specific information about the delicate matter of menstruation, euphemistically referred to as "certain days," "problem days," and "trying days."

While most Body Care advertisers addressed the teen reader as an individual, a singular buyer in a great consumer universe, a few considered her in relation to her family. Tone pitched its skin care line to both daughter and mother, noting its "correct preparations for every skin type." In addition, the copy alluded to the expectation that daughter would eventually become mother, thus – much like cosmetic advertiser Elizabeth Arden – attempting to create a "now and later" relationship with the teen consumer, promising that "Tone, faithfully used in later years, will help maintain the skin at its beauty peak."³¹

Nonspi advertisements represented mothers as experts, picturing them hovering over or grasping their daughters in a very maternal fashion. The first of Nonspi's ads is written as a daughter/mother dialogue, the daughter asking the question, the mother answering, the visual mouthpiece for the advertisers message. "Mother, Can Perspiration Spoil this Dress?" the daughter inquires; "Mother" answers: "Yes! Underarm perspiration ruins many a beautiful dress, and underarm odors ruin many a girl's happiness too."³² A Nonspi ad that appeared in a later issue also pictures mother with daughter, but this time addresses them as co-consumers, promoting Nonspi "for teenagers as well as their mothers and older sisters."³³

Perhaps Teena's oddest suitor was laxative-maker, Ex-Lax. In contrast to the Tone and Nonspi ads which represented mothers as role models, the mothers (and fathers) in Ex-Lax's ads never knew best, as they fumbled and bumbled in their attempts to help the teen overcome her unspoken "malady" – constructing and/or reflecting the proverbial adversarial teen/parent relationship. Instead, Ex-Lax ads represented the teen and sometimes her Aunt (a "persona" the magazine's editorial tone often took) as the experts on the body. One such ad began with the heading: "Mother was such a problem!" and explained:

I just couldn't do a thing with Mother when I was little. Whenever I needed a laxative, she'd force me to take some horrid old medicine that would shake me up inside and leave me feeling *just awful!* [...] "Finally, Mother got wise to Ex-Lax! Golly, what a happy day that was for me."³⁴

A few months later, the Ex-Lax advertisement played off of the age-old tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, giving the narrative a very gendered reading. In a

quest for the cure, Dad “means well” but picked one that was *too strong*, Mom “harps on the subject,” picking one that was *too mild*.³⁵ Aunt Lu, however, picked the happy medium, leading the teen narrator to exclaim: “You can reason with Aunt Lu! When I told her my troubles, she said, ‘What *you* need is Ex-Lax!’ She was right, too!”³⁶

While some Body Care advertisers addressed the reader as a teen consumer from the beginning and others continued to talk past her, some changed over time, with their initial ads addressing adult women and their later ads speaking to teen girls.

This growing understanding of the teen consumer among Body Care product manufacturers could be attributed, in part, to Estelle Ellis’s promotional campaign, including her “corrective” pamphlet, “Who Is Teena? Judy Jeckyll or Formalda Hyde?” (detailed in Chapter 4, “Teena Goes to Market”).³⁷ Body Care Advertisers whose ads metamorphosed over time (perhaps in response to the magazine’s educational prompts) included Drene Shampoo, Swan Soap, and Revlon Cosmetics.

Drene Shampoo’s first three ads in *Seventeen* featured pictures of adult women and copy that addressed a generalized woman consumer. Beginning in February 1945, however, Drene’s ads started to feature pictures of younger women with text references to “youth” generally and “Miss Seventeen” more specifically. Swan Soap made a similar change in their ad campaign. While their first ads spoke about their product and its use in very general terms, their later ads became more teen-focused, speaking specifically to “Miss Teen.” In *Seventeen*’s July 1945 issue, Swan’s ad defined and explained to the teen readership the “4 Kinds of Love and What to do about Them.” (FYI: They are romantic love, parental love, clothing love,

and love for Swan Soap). In later issues, Swan advised teen girls on “What Do Boys Like Most?”³⁸ and “Four Little [skin care] Pitfalls and How To Lick Them.”³⁹ In following this tack, Swan, like Kotex, wasn’t just selling their product; they were also helping to construct the female teen norm/ideal. This selling strategy mirrored the discourse in the editorial articles on “How You Feel and Look.” The inferred message: teen girls *needed* very specific direction in how to be an ideal teen girl.

Perhaps the most dramatic ad campaign metamorphosis was undertaken by Revlon, a doyenne among cosmetics companies, both then and now. Revlon was a major presence in early *Seventeen*; its ads – full page, prominently placed, and often in color – appearing from its first issue. Initially, Revlon’s ads were distinctly adult-oriented. The ad on the back cover of the February 1945 issue was by far the most incongruous for the magazine’s teen readership. It featured a very mature adult woman wearing a red evening gown, fur stole and wide feather hat, her blood red tipped fingers holding a gold compact of indeterminate use (it could easily have been a cigarette case). The accompanying copy read: “Revlon color. Pulsating on lips. Vibrating on fingertips.”

Certainly, pulsating lips and vibrating fingers were not the vision of ideal teen chastity promoted in the editorial pages. By the summer of 1945, however, Revlon’s ads underwent a major “youthification,” progressively addressing a younger and younger constituency. In a two-page spread in the June issue, Revlon went back to school – college, to be precise. Under a caption that read “Revlon ... wins the campus!,” Revlon congratulated itself for being college girls’ favorite nail enamel,

“based on a recent survey of leading women’s colleges.”⁴⁰ The ad featured a picture of a college-age model posing in a long white gown, braids wrapped around her head (both signs of youth and purity), holding a small bouquet of flowers in one hand and her other arm wrapped around a serviceman. A month later, Revlon’s ad featured a scenario in which a young woman prepared to leave for college. And by *Seventeen*’s “First Birthday” issue, Revlon had finally worked its way back to high school. In that month’s two-page color spread, Revlon specifically marketed itself to teenage girls, personified in the ad by five young women, all with ribbons in their hair, sprawled about, eating, studying, applying fingernail polish, and showing off polished nails. The caption advises less school-study, more self-study:

Comes a time to put aside the book and ponder about yourself ... The high school’s prettiest girls insist on matching lips and fingertips with long-lasting Revlon Nail Enamel and Lipstick.⁴¹

Thus, slowly but steadily over the course of the first year, the marketing campaigns of some Body Care advertisers began to specifically target the teen girl as a unique consumer. On the other hand, a significant number did not change course, continuing to produce campaigns directed at vixens, not virgins. There was a much better “fit,” however, between Body Wear advertisers and *Seventeen*’s readership.

Body Wear Advertising: Showing the Way to the Feminine Body Ideal

While Body Care advertisers doled out ample servings of advice to educate *Seventeen*’s readers on the “ways of the (feminine) world,” Body Wear advertisers used the strategy of “show and tell” – offering pages upon pages of pictures of young women role models “showing the way” (usually via a department store) to the

feminine teen ideal. In addition, unlike Body Care advertisers more generally, they directly targeted the teen consumer from the magazine's beginning, selling clothing made especially for "you" and using models who looked teen-aged. This congruence between consumer and product was most likely due to the fact that the clothing industry had already begun to recognize the emerging teen niche, slowly building this specialty clothing market over the previous two decades.⁴² Thus, clothing ads in *Seventeen's* initial issues offer a look into the state of the teen clothing industry as it continued to develop in the 1940's, as well as some insight into *Seventeen's* influence on this industry's healthy and rapid growth.

Generally, Body Wear advertisements in *Seventeen* divided into two broad categories: ads for department stores and ads for clothing manufacturers. From the magazine's very first issue, national department store Saks 5th Avenue (with stores in New York City, Chicago, Beverly Hills, and Detroit) as well as metropolitan department stores like the Blum Store of Philadelphia and Mandel Brothers of Chicago, showcased themselves and their teen clothing lines to *Seventeen's* nationwide readership. With each subsequent issue, new stores joined the parade, constructing a purchasing road map that began at the buying mecca of New York City (Saks, Bloomingdale's, Macy's, Lord & Taylor) and traveled out to other major metropolitan centers, such as Chicago (Mandel Brothers, Carson Pirie Scott, and Marshall Fields & Co.), Washington D.C. (The Hecht Store), Philadelphia (Blum Store, Bonwit Teller, Gimbel's and DeWee's), Detroit (Ernst Kern Company), and Boston (Filene's). Over time, lesser-known department stores from mid-size cities

such as Kansas City (Harzfeld's), New Orleans (Holmes), Dallas (Neiman-Marcus), Grand Rapids, Michigan (Herpolsheimer's) and Jacksonville, Florida (Furghgott's), placed themselves on this advertising map.⁴³

The department store ads in *Seventeen's* early issues also indicate another trend: one that found teen girls becoming a more distinct, market(able) category, deserving of shopping places and consumer products just for them. As *Seventeen's* first year progressed, more and more department store ads announced their own recent additions – the “teen shop.” Although teen shops existed prior to *Seventeen's* arrival to the fashion world – in fact, as far back as the 1930's⁴⁴ – the magazine offered the perfect advertising venue, with unprecedented access to millions of teen shoppers nationwide. Some department stores gave their teen departments creative monikers such as the “Slick-Chick Shop” at Columbus, Ohio's Union Store, but most kept to more easily identifiable names, variations of the target shoppers' specific demographic characteristics. Saks Fifth Avenue's “Young Circle” and Scruggs Vandervort Barney's “Youthfully Yours Shop” highlighted her youth, generally. More often, stores specifically referenced her “teen” age and high school attendance; among the most popular names: “Teen-Age Shop” (Hecht Store, Neiman-Marcus), “Teen Shop” (Mandel Brother, Schuster's), “High School Shop” (Ernst Kern Company, Gimbel's, Holme's, Marshall Field & Co., Stewart's), and the “Hi-School Shop” (Bloomingdale's, Boston Store, Famous-Barr, Filene's, Harvey's, Wolf & Dessauer). Sometimes, perhaps to leave no doubt in shoppers' minds as to the age range of the department, the names incorporated both age and school references, as

with the “Teen-High Shop” at Hudson’s of Detroit.

Concurrently, as clothing advertisers’ references to “teen shops” grew, so too did references to “teen-sizes” and “teen-sized” clothing – as opposed to women’s and junior size fashions. Although Helen Valentine insisted that *Seventeen’s* editorial fashion pages feature only teen-size clothing, the magazine accepted advertising for the range of women’s clothing makers and sizes. Thus, in the first issues of *Seventeen*, teen-specific clothing ads were interspersed among ads for junior and women’s clothes. A myriad of companies offered a confusing array of size choices, including Junior sizes 9 to 15,⁴⁵ Sub-Junior sizes 7 to 15,⁴⁶ Princess Junior Sizes 11-17,⁴⁷ and Mite Sizes 7-15.⁴⁸ On the other hand, advertisements for “chubby sizes” 10 ½ to 16 ½ – i.e., clothes made for those teen girls who deviated from the body ideal – were a rarity.

By the end of the first year, however, teen-sized clothing became more prevalent in the advertising pages, marketed by department stores as well as a growing contingent of teen clothing producers, including: American Debuteen, CarolTeen, Derby Sportswear, Emily Wilkens, Gail Berk Classics, Jane Engel, Joan Lord Fashions, Juniorette, Jr. Deb, Sandra Lee, Teen-Set, Teentimers, and York Teen. Teentimers, a New York City clothing manufacturer which began operation in 1942, offers a great individual example of the fluidity of the women’s clothing industry during this time period. Although the company began as a manufacturer of junior wear, it changed course after learning that department store buyers were marketing its wares to high school age girls. The move proved foresightful, and Teentimers

became one of the most prominent teen clothing companies in the 1940's – and a major advertiser in *Seventeen*.⁴⁹

Most Body Wear advertisements meshed well with *Seventeen's* editorial policies and mirrored the magazine's approach to the reader. Adopting a tone similar to *Seventeen's* editorial voice, Body Wear advertisers often spoke to the teen girl directly and confidently, asserting that they really did know her – and her needs – best. An Emily Wilkins ad from the December 1944 issue offers a good representation of this tone and message:

Emily Wilkins with her genius for reading the teen-age mind has dreamed up the dresses you need for holiday dates. She knows that there is nothing like a good dress properly moulded to a young figure to develop the poise you need when suddenly you discover (jeeppers!) you're almost grown up.⁵⁰

Wilkins' mention of "proper moulding" signals a difference between the fashion discourse in advertising and editorial content during *Seventeen's* first year: Clothing advertisers seemed far more body conscious than the magazine's fashion writers, routinely focusing on the imperative of creating and displaying a *slender* figure. For instance, an ad for the Jr. Shop at J. P. Allen in Atlanta describes the featured dress as "whittl[ing] a waistline you usually skip lunch to get,"⁵¹ while a Carol King dress is described as having "a full shirred skirt to make your waist look no bigger 'n a minute!"⁵²

Not surprisingly, girdle makers focused almost exclusively on the discipline (and punishment) of the teen girl body. AMERICAN GIRL foundations promised that its "girdle makes you gurgle at new found glamour – diminishes hips – makes

your derriere mind!"⁵³ Flexnit, a foundation company that had recently begun marketing to teen girls, specifically, offers another typical exemplar of girdle ads, generally. Featuring a shadowy drawing of a teen-age girl wearing nothing but a white girdle, the text reads:

As of this minute, every Flexnit garment is made definitely for you – to mold you and hold you in the way you should grow. Later, if your figure needs more control, there'll be a Flexnit foundation to provide it.⁵⁴

These last two sentences seem to hearken back to the biblical mandate to "Train up a child in the way (s)he should go, and when (s)he is old (s)he will not depart from it."⁵⁵ In a sense, Flexnit *was* talking about training Teena, in multiple ways – training her to discipline her own body through the use of the girdle, training her to be a lifelong consumer of their brand, and – most subtly – training her to present and display her body for the approval of men. While Flexnit left this last mandate unspoken, many other advertisers didn't. An advertisement for Teen-Set frocks from D.C. department store Lansburgh's "Smart Teen Shop" made the link between body and romance explicit, describing their wares as: "Date-appealing dresses to play up your classy chassis. Smooth swoonables that will send him out-of-this atmosphere."⁵⁶

The promise of heterosexual romance permeated Body Wear advertisements. Clothing manufacturers routinely described their apparel as: "date-bait," "beau-bait," "wolf-bait," "and "beau-catcher." Perhaps just as often, however, they promoted a romantic relationship between girls and their clothes. These kinds of love matches knew no apparel boundaries: "You'll get a 'crush' on all three of these crushed leather

lammie-cape bags!" promised purse-maker Belt-Modes⁵⁷; "Saybrooke is the love of your life," cooed the sweater manufacturer⁵⁸; and shoe company Connies bragged that "Smooth girls love them with all their heart."⁵⁹ Clothing, at least according to the advertisers, served as a conduit between girls and boys – girls could fall in love with their clothes, and then boys would fall in love with the (well-dressed) girl. An ad for Yearounder hats illustrated the relationship, promising their clothes able "to win your heart (and HIS, too)."⁶⁰

Some clothing advertisers were so aware of the magazine's role as conduit between themselves and the teen buyer that they photographed their models reading or carrying *Seventeen* magazine. Four different ads in the first year – Joan Lord fashions,⁶¹ Jane Holly Originals,⁶² Thornton Hats,⁶³ and Gail Berk Classic fashions⁶⁴ – featured a teen model clutching an easily identifiable issue of *Seventeen* magazine in her hands. Thornton Hats, in fact, ran similar ads – identifying both their product and *Seventeen* – in other venues, including the fashion trade newspaper, *Women's Wear Daily*.⁶⁵ Of course, this could be construed as an advertisement for *Seventeen* – which, in essence, it was. But it was also a sign from the business community that they understood the important role of *Seventeen* as the link between their products and the teen buyer. Indeed, in just a year's time, *Seventeen* became the advertisers' place to be in order to catch the eye of the millions of Teenas whose purses carried pocketbooks with money to spend.

ADVERTISING IN THE POSTWAR PERIOD

As a general trend, the advertising numbers in *Seventeen* tell a story of

stability and consistency, whether in times of war (9/44-9/45) or peace (9/49-4/50). [see Table 2, Appendix C]. The overall 45/55 ratio of editorial to advertising content fluctuated slightly across seasons and special issues, but didn't budge as an annual average. In addition, a similar quantitative continuity occurred in relation to the types of products advertised in the magazine across time periods. A comparison of advertising ratios between *Seventeen's* first year and sixth year reveals little or no change for most categories: Body Wear and Body Care advertising continued to spatially dominate, while advertising for Entertainment, Education/Employment, Miscellaneous, and Snacks remained minimal, at best.

The end of the war, however, did bring some changes to the advertising landscape, most obviously in the disappearance of the flag-waving slogans, war bond appeals, and pictures of soldiers that had served as patriotic prompts to consumption. In addition, the postwar period ushered in a cultural change of focus, particularly for women, from the outside world to the coziness of hearth and home. This renewed and heightened call to domesticity permeated *Seventeen's* advertising pages, transforming some advertisement categories more than others. For Body Wear ads, the cultural shift was somewhat less than seismic. The long-haired model Teenas of the war period sheered their long locks and changed their clothes to mark the postwar period, but their represented "lives" didn't change dramatically in most other ways. The cultural shift toward domesticity informed fashion, but didn't transform it – in part because the beauty/romance mandate that underlaid fashion was innately compatible with the domestic mandate. On the other hand, changing times did

influence the advertisements for Body Care and Domestic products.

Advertisers As Teachers: Girls + Product = Love & Marriage

Although the postwar period saw a very slight decrease in the percentage of Body Care ads, an increasing number of Body Care advertisers targeted teen-age girls specifically. Those that spoke directly to the teen girl consumer continued the strategy of selling their products wrapped in a discourse of non-product-related advice, but that advice grew increasingly focused on the boy-girl relationship. In addition, a new advertising force arose in the postwar period to join the Body Care advertisers in their advisory capacity to teen girls: Domestic product advertisers. Indeed, advertisements for Domestic products saw the greatest change between war and postwar periods, increasing in both prevalence (as measured by percentage of total advertising space) and visibility (as measured by page coverage, location and use of color). Sterling silver advertisers, in particular, began to invade *Seventeen's* most influential advertising spaces, selling their wares by speaking directly to the teen girl consumer and by painting an evocative portrait of a young woman's idealized future. Together, the Body Care and Domestic advertisers of the postwar period marketed more than products or even a consumer lifestyle. As a duality, they constructed a complementary narrative in which their products led the way to the ideal feminine future – one that ran a narrow trajectory from heterosexual love to marriage to domestic bliss.

Body Care Advertisers: How to Clean Your Skin and Catch Your Man

In the interim period between *Seventeen*'s first and fifth birthdays, the magazine made a concerted effort to woo Body Care advertisers, informing and selling them on the potential buying power of the teen girl consumer. While Estelle Ellis and her staff continued their promotional campaign generally, other staffers, including Editor-in-Chief Helen Valentine and Beauty Editor Jean Campbell, reached out to the beauty industry specifically. Valentine addressed The Fashion Group, a prominent fashion industry organization, on the topic of grooming and beauty strategies for teen-age girls.⁶⁶ She informed these industry insiders that high school age girls needed – indeed wanted – to be given very specific beauty regimen advice and the products to accomplish it. According to Valentine, *Seventeen*'s role was to deliver the advice, while the industry's role was to supply the product. Specifically suggesting that cosmetics companies create and market age-appropriate palettes of demure pale pinks to teen girls, she also reminded them that “90%” of youthful good grooming was “cleanliness.”

In February 1949, Valentine and Campbell participated in a panel presentation for The Fashion Group on the utility of perfume.⁶⁷ Together with 13 other women's magazine editors and led by Chanel president H. Gregory, the panel touted the idea that public perceptions about perfume's “necessity” should be expanded to consider it everyday wear, and not just for special occasions – nor just for mature women. Several months later, Jean Campbell made a very direct appeal to the beauty industry on behalf of the teen girl as a consumer of grooming products. In an article published in the industry magazine, *Cosmetics and Toiletries*, Campbell's title boldly inquired:

“Why snub 8 million customers?” Her impassioned response extolled the assets of the female teen as a highly lucrative purchase/r. Questioning the logic of an industry that seemed to be ignoring her, Campbell pointed to the rapid response of the fashion and domestic industries in their courtship of Teena and her “herd” of cohorts. Her argument mirrored the promotional campaign’s major points about teen girls as consumers, including their independence from parents (“They have been liberated from the authority of adult control”) tempered with their residual vulnerability and need for adult input (“The teen-ager is the easiest to sell [...] She hasn’t built up the blasé resistance of habit”). Best of all, according to Campbell, the teen girl had access to her own money as well as her “papa’s.” Asking the industry “And what do you do when it’s [teen purchasing power] right under your cash register? Ignore it?” Campbell implores, *“Better look a little closer.”*⁶⁸

Apparently, a significant number of Body Care advertisers did just that. In the magazine’s sixth year, 18 companies placed advertisements in *Seventeen* that marketed their product directly to a teen girl consumer. Of the 13 advertisers from the first year whose ads targeted teens specifically, only four remained: Elizabeth Arden, Helena Rubinstein, Kotex, and Lux soap. Others – Yardley, Rose Laird makeup, Ex Lax, Swan soap, Kreml shampoo, Tone cosmetics, and Nonspi Deodorant – completely stopped advertising in *Seventeen*. Drene and Revlon continued as major advertisers but both ceased making teen references in their ads. Although Revlon, in particular, continued to constitute a significant presence in the magazine, their full page color ads, appearing in every issue from 9/49-9/50, now

featured only women of college-age and older. New advertisers, however, emerged to fill the void, including: Camay (soap), Noxzema, Tussy, and Cashmere Bouquet (skin care); Prell, Halo, and Breck (shampoo); Mum and Veto (deodorant); Ipana (toothpaste); Modess and Tampax (feminine hygiene) and Toni (home permanents). Interestingly, cosmetics advertisements declined in the postwar period, while advertisements for cleansing products increased. In addition, the adult vixens of the perfume and cosmetics ads of the war period all but disappeared from postwar *Seventeen*, but so did the adult mothers who had previously accompanied their teen daughters in the skin care, deodorant, and medicine ads. Instead, Body Care advertisers of the postwar period joined their Body Wear counterparts in addressing the teen girl as an autonomous individual and a unique consumer within her own world of product possibilities.

Body care, whether advocated by *Seventeen's* beauty department or its advertisers, was never really an end in itself. Certainly, these advertisers marketed their products to teens for their obvious usages – as cleansers and hygiene aids. But often, underlying the practical product promises was another kind of promise – the promise of love and romance as the result of using their product. And to *that* end, these advertisers became educators, offering teen girls a heaping helping of romantic direction, advice, and prognostication.

Often, the postwar advertisers doled out relationship guidance with a subtle hand. For instance, many beauty ads included pictures of boys and girls flirting, visually linking heterosexual romance with the use of their product. Some

advertisers, especially those selling feminine hygiene products, spoke to girls in *lingua sotto voce*, as if sharing very special, important information. Modess and Tampax both used this tone of intimacy to promote the unobtrusiveness of their products. For Modess, this meant marketing the box that their product (feminine napkins) came in – an unmarked box, “shaped to resemble many *other* kinds of boxes” and intended to “help keep your secret.”⁶⁹ Tampax tampons marketed their product’s internal (thus secret) usage as a way to keep that “you-know-every-month business” completely under wraps and “improve your social poise on the ‘difficult days.’”⁷⁰ The key selling point for each of these products was their ability to conceal a completely normal bodily function. Although never overtly stated, the objects of this subterfuge were most likely the young men who populated the teen girl’s life, since other women were acutely aware of “those days.” Following an age-old theme of patriarchal cultures, menstruation was represented as the antithesis of cleanliness and of the beauty myth – thus, a hindrance in the pursuit of romantic relationships.⁷¹

Another feminine hygiene company, Kotex, began as a major advertiser during *Seventeen*’s first year and became even more prominent in the magazine’s sixth year. Its ads continued to skirt the issue of its product’s purpose, opting instead to educate teen girls on body maintenance and relationship etiquette through their quiz, “Are You in the Know?” Once again, Kotex buried copy about menstruation (euphemistically referred to as: “those days,” “difficult days” and days when you have “outline qualms”) as addendums to the much more prominent quiz questions and answers. Body maintenance information covered such topics as how to ascertain your

appropriate weight,⁷² what to do about a sunburn⁷³ and whether you should you cut your own hair,⁷⁴ while the omnipresent accompanying pictures of young men and women on dates visually linked the relationship between beauty and romance. Often, Kotex dropped any attempt at subtlety and directly advised the teen reader on boy/girl relationships, answering such burning questions as: "If he's talkative, what's your technique?"⁷⁵ "Should a present for her Sigh Man be personalized?"⁷⁶ How can you "snag the prof?"⁷⁷ and "How should you greet your date mate?"⁷⁸

While Kotex and the other feminine hygiene manufacturers constructed the parameters of the ideal teen girl's body maintenance and her heterosexual relationships, soap maker Camay set out the trajectory of her life through its campaign featuring "Your Firsts." "Your Firsts" covered the pivotal moments of a young woman's life, which – not coincidentally – all related to young men and romance. Every month, Camay highlighted different important "Firsts," from the teen girl's "First Orchid!" and "First School Beau!" to a college girl's "First Fraternity Pin!" and "First Black Dress!" Every installation of "Firsts!" however, ended in exactly the same way, with a picture of "another radiant Camay bride" and the admonishment to "follow the lead of the lovely Camay brides." This particular game of follow the leader started at a bar of Camay soap and ended at the marriage altar. In the world constructed by Camay, marriage was presented as both goal and future end point for the teen girl. Although Body Care ads of the war period sometimes used brides to promote their products, it wasn't until the postwar period that advertisers such as began to directly link teen girls and marriage.

But Camay wasn't the only advertiser selling marriage to *Seventeen's* teen girl readership in the postwar period. An entirely new breed of advertiser began to appear in the pages of *Seventeen* pitching marriage and homemaking along with their products. As harbingers of the domestic ideal that would fully develop in the 1950's, these purveyors of domestic products groomed *Seventeen's* teen girl readers to prepare for an idealized feminine adulthood that ran a very specific trajectory, Destination: Domesticity.

Domestic Advertisers: First Comes Silver, Then Comes Marriage, Then Comes Teena ... With a Hostess Carriage

The rise of Domestic advertisements in postwar *Seventeen* mirrored the shift that took place in the magazine's postwar editorial content, as well as in American society more generally, as domesticity (re)emerged as an ideal feminine role after its short-lived wartime slumber. Although advertisements for Domestic products didn't begin to approach the numerical dominance of either Body Wear or Body Care products in postwar *Seventeen*, they did leap from last place to third place in five years time. More importantly, Domestic advertisers invaded the prime selling territory in *Seventeen*, hawking their homemaking wares in full page, color ads in the influential "first well" section of the magazine. And, much like the Body Care advertisers, they used their prestigious position as a bully-pulpit, offering the teen readership an advanced course in Ideal Womanhood 101. Thus, in the new postwar period, Domestic advertisers joined their Body Care counterparts in discursively constructing the postwar "modern" feminine ideal, educating the reading Teenas on

how to achieve it, and guiding their expectations for the future.

Domestic ads in *Seventeen* didn't just increase from war to postwar period, however; they metamorphosed. During the war period, the few Domestic ads that appeared in the magazine's pages peddled laundry soap, fabric and bedding. In addition, advertisers promoted these items in a kind of gender-generic way – i.e., as products to be used by *people* in a variety of settings. For instance, an August 1945 advertisement for the Bates Company displayed their bedspreads and drapes in a college dorm room,⁷⁹ while the February 1945 Swan Soap ad featured Gracie Allen and George Burns.⁸⁰ During the postwar period, however, Domestic ads became highly gendered as a completely different group of advertisers came on board to promote products intended to be used by *women* in household settings. In their postwar scenarios, these advertisers portrayed girls and women as domestic producers and consumers, boys and men as domestic receivers, and the home as a distinctly woman's world.

In the period spanning 9/49 to 9/50, 22 different manufacturers advertised the “necessities” of post-pubescent feminine domesticity: silverware, hope chests, culinary products and tools, and home decorating items. Half of these advertisers marketed their products specifically and directly to teen girls, led by the representatives of the sterling silver industry. Indeed, sterling silver advertisers became a major advertising presence in postwar *Seventeen*, their full page, color ads prominently displayed in the most prestigious areas of the magazine. As with many Body Wear ads, they often featured teen girl models, but perhaps more importantly,

and very much like some Body Care ads and the editorial voice of the magazine itself, they directly engaged *Seventeen's* readers, referring to them individually as "You," and addressing them either from a caring adult authority standpoint or as another teen girl (speaking as if she were confiding in a friend). Using this intimate conversational style, manufacturers such as Gorham, International, Towle, and Reed & Barton doled out a tremendous amount of advice about both sterling silver tableware and the domestic lifestyle, much of their discourse visually enhanced with exclamation points and typographical accentuation meant to reflect the *vital importance!* of their product and its place in the ideal feminine world.

In selling their products, sterling silver manufacturers, as with Domestic product advertisers more generally, drew on homemaking as a goal and a feminine ideal. Thus, their narratives, often individually but certainly as a discursive whole, followed a very specific trajectory for feminine success, in which Romance -> Marriage -> Home -> Homemaking. In many ways, this trajectory builds on that begun by the Body Care advertisers, whose stories were underlaid with the promise that Beauty -> Romance. In fact, considering the narrative in its entirety, beginning with Beauty and ending with Homemaking, reveals Marriage to be the linchpin of the advertisers' postwar discursive equation. Whether referred to as the "happy day,"⁸¹ the "Big Day,"⁸² the "*most important event in history!*"⁸³ or "THE moment of my life!"⁸⁴ sterling silver advertisers communicated to the teen reader the absolute import of the wedding in the life of a woman.

Obviously, the mandate of consumption underlaid the entire discourse of the

advertising pages – as well as a fair amount of the editorial content. That said, it is important to note that the postwar domestic advertising narratives presented marriage to a man as the *only* way to achieve the ideal feminine consumer lifestyle. Although a single woman “careerist” conceivably wielded the financial resources to make her own purchases, in the stories told by the sterling manufacturers, acquisitions such as “a home of her own” and the sterling silver within it were always tied to marriage. The teen-age girl narrator portrayed in the February 1950 International Sterling ad makes the linear relationship between sterling, marriage (as the antithesis to career), and home-ownership very clear:

Now that I’m almost grown up, I’ve been doing some heavy brooding about the future. School can’t go on forever, and I’m certainly not the career type. I’m a little young to set the date and pick the bridesmaids. (Mother’s eyebrows would go sky-high at the thought!) But a girl can’t start too soon to *plan* for marriage and a home of her own.⁸⁵

Indeed, the teen-age girls who inhabited the world of sterling silver advertisements spent much of their time dreaming of and planning for a future that culminated in a wedding. These dreams could be triggered by myriad experiences, events, and holidays. As described in the voices of teen girls or the caring advertiser authority, the prompts for domestic reflection included Valentine’s Day, Prom, Christmas, Graduation...:

It’s the time of year, I guess, with Valentine’s Day just around the corner, to get lyrical – to dream about a long, swooshy dress for a Prom ... and having a date with the most wonderful boy! Starts a girl thinking. About the future. I could be wrong, but this little tune might wind up as the wedding march.⁸⁶

Some Christmas – and it might not be too far away – you’ll be trimming your own tree in your dream-house-for-two.⁸⁷

Spring's in the air, graduation time is here– and something in your heart has burst into bloom. Suddenly you keep dreaming about that longed-for springtime when you'll walk down the aisle on your father's arm. That dream may come true sooner than you think!⁸⁸

...and most certainly the weddings of other young women:

MAYBE YOU'VE DONE IT TOO ... sneaked away from the receiving line for a long look at the wedding gifts . You “oh” and “ah” because everything is so beautiful, and look longest at the silver. Then suddenly, you decide to stop sighing and start saving for your *own* Gorham. And by your wedding day you'll probably have a whole set of Gorham to start out with.⁸⁹

After establishing holy matrimony and homemaking as the vision of the future, the sterling silver advertisers set about assisting teen-age girls in their journey toward the dream. They did this by marketing their wares as the starting gate on the road to Destination: Domesticity. As one International Sterling ad explained, “Choosing her sterling is an exciting milestone in any girl's life, for it's the first step toward the dreamhome she'll have someday.”⁹⁰ Lunt ads offered young “hostesses to be” a general timetable for beginning their collection process, advising them that “The day you find the pattern that *really* pleases you ... that's the time you should start your Sterling. Chances are this will be long before you're engaged [...].”⁹¹ Towle presented the best case scenario for preparation, when its teen girl narrator bragged about her older sister, “Why she had her whole collection of Towle before she even had her man picked out!”⁹²

Thus, according to the narratives of the sterling silver advertisers, the journey to the dream followed a very narrow, linear path in which, to paraphrase an old nursery rhyme, “first comes sterling, then comes marriage, then comes Teena with a

hostess carriage.” However, the advertising campaigns brilliantly marketed sterling silverware as something more than just the first step; they also marketed it as the material representation of marriage and love – a substitute to cling to until the “real thing” came along. Sterling manufacturer Gorham describes their product in the same terms commonly used for the matrimonial ideal:

Beautiful sterling (solid) silver, to love and live with all your life! Its very permanence – the fact that it can’t wear off or wear out, ever-symbolizes the lasting, till-death-do-us-part marriage that you mean yours to be.⁹³

Taking on the role of matchmaker, sterling silver advertisers promoted silverware as one half of a love match, often portraying girls who had fallen in love with these inanimate objects, apparently meant for more than spearing meat and spooning soup. Speaking of these metal utensils as knights in shining armor, International Sterling promised that “[...] there will be *one in particular* that will melt your heart”⁹⁴ while Nobility Plate took the fairy tale to its logical end, by offering teen girls the opportunity to “[...] choose yours like a princess.”⁹⁵

When the teen girl representatives of these ads spoke to the reader, they gushed as adoringly about their chosen patterns as they might about a much desired suitor. Towle’s omnipresent full page color ads featured a different teen girl (a model, not a “real girl”) and scenario every month. Although the Towle girls and their scripts changed, they were united in their common love of their sterling. Miss February states: “The way I feel about Madeira, the TOWLE pattern I picked, proves a girl can be starry-eyed and practical too,”⁹⁶ while her October counterpart confides:

Everyone knows what I want – more of my Sterling. Ever since the happy

day I chose TOWLE's Old Master and started my set with one spoon, my set has been growing. [...] I fall in love all over again with every piece of TOWLE's Old Master.⁹⁷

Apparently, the girls of the sterling silver ads just couldn't get enough of these *objets d'amore* – and why not? For as Reed & Barton explains, “your” sterling pattern is “The Love of Your Lifetime,” resulting in an attraction so strong and endearing that “[...] you can't resist a love-at-first-sight feeling.”⁹⁸ Perhaps the possibility of creating such a strong love match explains the discursive *imperative* in many of these ads. Or perhaps more likely, it resulted from the silver manufacturers' awareness of the potential economic windfall that awaited them if their matchmaking succeeded. Whatever the explanation, almost every ad implored the reader to begin the selection process immediately, visually shouting the necessity in italics: “*It's the thing to do,*”⁹⁹ “*Start this Christmas,*”¹⁰⁰ “*Choose [...] now!*”¹⁰¹ “*Get started,*”¹⁰² and “*Don't wait!*”¹⁰³ Gorham most certainly spoke for the other sterling silver companies when it boldly bellowed at the teen reader from the inside cover of the August 1950 issue: “**You're never too young!**”

The sterling silver advertisers often asserted that *intelligence* separated the girls who understood the necessity of silverware ownership from the girls who did not. Over and over, across brands, advertisers told the readers that “smart” and “wise” girls recognized the importance of beginning their sterling silver collections. However, the intelligence about which they spoke was less IQ than EQ (Economic Quotient). The September 1950 Towle ad, read closely, serves as a “fine” example of how advertisers constructed intelligence as a characteristic afforded by only the

affluent. The teen girl narrator, holding a pair of glasses (a “sign” of intelligence) looks at the reader through one of its lenses and proceeds to inform her about:

What every Girl Should Know (about her Sterling)
Smart enough to want Sterling – and wise enough to know:

THIS. TOWLE Sterling means fine solid silver in beautiful patterns that are found only in the finest stores. [...]

Still More. It's so easy to collect your set of TOWLE. When you choose your TOWLE pattern, your favorite TOWLE store will register it for you. Simplifies matters all around – your friends know what you want, and that's what you get for Christmas and for birthdays. Prices to please all your friends – only \$2.95 for a teaspoon, to start with.¹⁰⁴

This ad, a specific example of a more general trend, assumed a young consumer who shopped in the “finest stores” (indeed, she has a favorite) and whose teen-age friends routinely bought each other gifts, not balking at the purchase of a single teaspoon of “fine solid silver” for “only \$2.95” (a minimum starting point that translates to \$24.69 in 2006 U.S. currency).

Another Towle ad extrapolated their sales pitch from spoon to set, speculating about the financial abilities of a girl for whom: “A teaspoon costs as little as \$2.95 – sized to your allowance; place settings and serving pieces fit relatives' budgets!”¹⁰⁵ Since a place setting would run more than three times the cost of a spoon (and perhaps much more), the financial fit required relatives with expansive budgets and generous pocketbooks. Indeed, the girls who inhabited the rarified world of sterling silver ads often talked of their silver collections as a financial investment, much like their parent's stocks and bonds. This is exemplified by the narrator of the December

1949 Towle ad, who writes her list of New Year's Resolutions and includes among them: *I will prove to myself that I'm smart.* (And the very first step will be to start a set of TOWLE Sterling ... My Christmas money is going right into solid silver).¹⁰⁶

The "smart" girls of the sterling silver ads never put their brain power to use figuring out how to *earn* their sterling-buying money. Instead, they spent much of their time sweetly scheming to get into the pocketbooks of their affluent friends and relatives. Ads for Reed & Barton, Gorham, Towle and International Sterling all advised the reader to just "drop a hint" to their friends and relatives, and then expect the gifts to come pouring in. Towle even devised an ingenious strategy that allowed girls to subtly communicate their sterling heart's desires to potential gift-givers, in the guise of a "pattern pin" to be worn as jewelry:

When you pick a TOWLE pattern you're entitled to wear one of the wonderful little TOWLE pattern pins – a miniature teaspoon that is a perfect reproduction of the pattern of your choice!¹⁰⁷

Towle marketed its pattern pin as a way for entitled girls to get what they wanted, while maintaining their feminine facade of passive desire. The May 1950 Towle girl explains the genteel subterfuge:

A couple of months ago I picked my pattern – TOWLE's French Provencial – and I've been wearing my little pattern pin around. It's much more ladylike than hinting! And what a way to build a set of TOWLE Sterling – the easy way, through gifts.¹⁰⁸

Thus, Towle's pattern pin allowed girls to signal their consumptive preferences, thereby sidestepping the crass strategy of overtly voicing their desire. In addition, and perhaps not coincidentally, the pin also allowed the wearer to

simultaneously signal her domestic aspirations (for marriage and homemaking) to the boys in her life – again, subtly and wordlessly.

Still, advertisers needed girls to get the word out about their love of sterling, and strongly encouraged them to speak up with their close relatives and, most particularly, with each other, in peer group social interaction. As part of its ad campaign, International Sterling showcased sponsored gatherings where small groups of “real” high school and college-aged girls got together to choose their silver patterns. These selection sessions also illuminated the social class element of sterling collecting. The ads featured a changing array of sweater-set and pearl clad girls meeting in rarefied social settings, from “Dallas coeds” at “Southern Methodist University,”¹⁰⁹ to “Louisville Belles” at “Louisvilles’ famous Pendennis Club,”¹¹⁰ to “Birmingham teen-agers” at “the fashionable Birmingham County Club.”¹¹¹ Interestingly, although these girls appeared to share a common social class status and interest in sterling silver, the ads often worked to construct their differences and individualities. For example, each young woman wore a different colored outfit and selected a different sterling silver pattern. And International Sterling even published a key to match personality with sterling choice, which included these examples:

Perhaps you're idealistic, love tradition. You'll like French-inspired Joan of Arc [...]
You may be an individualist, with a flair for the unusual. For you – magnificent, massive Northern Lights [...]
There's a bit of the minx about you, a glint in your eye. Choose Enchantress – half-blossomy, half suave – all beautiful [...]
You've a fresh, sparkling, alive quality. Pick Spring Glory, springlike, bridelike, with a perfect unfolding flower [...]¹¹²

Interestingly, although advertisers on first glance appeared to be selling silver collecting as a communal bonding experience among middle and upper class girl consumers, they more often relied on a divide-and-conquer strategy in which they promoted silver as a way to achieve individualization and, ultimately, superiority through competition. Once girls selected the patterns that best expressed their “unique” personalities, they were positioned (by the advertiser) for one-on-one rivalry. The May 1950 Towle ad offered a material example of the consumptive impetus that competition brought to the silver collecting table. Their teen narrator sets the stage:

I thought I was the only one with a bright idea – “I want TOWLE Sterling for graduation,” I told my family. And then I found out most of the senior class said the same thing! We compare notes every noon – Sue’s ahead, with six whole place settings of Rambler Rose – but my Uncle Joe hasn’t been heard from yet, so I have hopes!¹¹³

CONCLUSION

Hope springs eternal, and for the advertisers of *Seventeen*, it must have included dreams of selling their products to a consumer force that would march into the future branded and ready to buy. To that end, *Seventeen*’s early Body Wear, Body Care, and Domestic advertisers worked to court, counsel and – ultimately – construct a postwar teen girl consumer. Their discourses meshed almost effortlessly, creating a narrative that echoed an age-old fairy tale in which the princess begins her journey armed with beauty, finds her prince, marries him and lives happily ever after in his

castle on the hill.

Seventeen's advertisers recited variations of this fairy tale and offered the reader strategies for achieving its happy ending. They advised her not just on the products of body wear, body care and domestic work, but also on heterosexual romance and homemaking – i.e., how to capture the prince and run the castle. Of course, fairy tales require their listener/readers to suspend reality and imagine themselves in the place of the protagonists, and this was true with the advertisers' stories. The value of the advertisers' overarching narrative, however, lay in the inaccessibility of the fantasy, thus impelling the reader into an endless pursuit of a gossamer apparition.

From a more material standpoint, *Seventeen's* advertisers understood that “Teena Mean[t] Business.” But in order to sell her their products, they had to first sell her a dream and a vision of the future. The vision they created with their pictures and stories was one very strictly boundaried by demarcations of gender, race, sexuality and social class. To some extent, this was moderated by the war, which created a temporary opportunity for the lowering of boundaries, society-wide. However, across war and postwar periods, *Seventeen's* advertisers constructed and counseled a teen girl who possessed the ideal feminine characteristics of western society: white unblemished skin, delicate facial features, slender figure, able body, upper/middle social class, a two parent home with siblings, and heterosexual desires.

In addition, the end of the war saw the advertisers' tales become even more specific and much less open to interpretation. During the war period, the advertisers

who talked to teen girls generally ended their stories at the princess finding love with the prince (product + girl = romance). The reader could envision their own version of the future – perhaps the princess married the prince, but continued to work outside the castle. In the postwar period, however, a new storyteller entered the picture, armed with a very specific happy ending for the advertisers' holistic narrative. The tale told by the domestic advertisers always ended in marriage and homemaking.

It seems ironic that as time went by, *Seventeen's* advertisers began constructing Teena as a fully-autonomous individual, unique in her consumer desires, while simultaneously selling her a dream that allowed for almost no variation in real life desires. But as a marketing strategy, it has its logic, however counterintuitive. Most recently we've seen it in the Army's slogan "An Army of One." *Seventeen's* advertisers were building a similar "army" – an army of individual women consumers.

CHAPTER 6

Seventeen at Peace: **Teena Leaves the World, Enters the Home, and Loses Her Mind**

it's five whole years

This is our birthday – we're five years old. And, as we blow out the candles on the cake, we have that special birthday feeling which combines a lot of pleasure with a little private stocktaking. How did I use this past year, what will I do with the new one which is about to be born? Magazines, like people, have their birthday thoughts.

We can't help wondering whether you were a reader of our first issue. If you were, you may possibly remember that we promised you a magazine that would try to reflect what you do, what you think, what you are. We said we would report on "everything that concerns, excites, annoys, pleases and perplexes you."

Sensing your own deep sincerity, we talked about the kind of human being you are. Not just about your clothes and your face, or even your talents and tastes ... but also about your relation to your family and your friends, your interest in the world and all the people in it.

You have proved yourself thoughtful, practical, attractive. You have shown skill and talent and an enormous amount of sense. All in all, we'd say you have been most satisfactory – and a very good friend. We'd like to feel that you can say as much for us. We hope that this is the magazine you really want – that it gives you plenty of help and fun and something to think about.

Many things have happened in five years. We know how greatly you have grown, we hope we've done a bit of growing too. But one thing remains constant. That squiggle below still says, as it did in our first issue, love to you from all of us on SEVENTEEN.

[Helen Valentine, "It's Five Whole Years," *Seventeen*, September 1949, 103]

Five years after her first letter of introduction, Helen Valentine again spoke directly to the reader in another birthday greeting. Although the two letters have similar elements and address similar topics, they diverge significantly in tone. Five years later, the ebullient spirit of Helen's first letter, brimming with the excitement of

the future, seems muted. In its stead, a tone of thoughtful consideration, of looking back and assessing the past, now underscores her words. Helen mentions the magazine's "private stocktaking," but perhaps she was doing some stocktaking of her own. *Seventeen* was her baby, the reader her concern, the magazine staff her responsibility, the intersection of the three her abiding passion. Whether she knew it yet or not, this letter was her last – a loving goodbye to the project and the people to which she had devoted the past five years of her life.

For as Helen states, "[m]any things have happened in five years." Changes had occurred on every level imaginable: in the global and national arenas, in the magazine industry, and at *Seventeen*. In the five years following *Seventeen*'s first birthday, a world war had ended and a cold war begun. The United Nations – an ideological entity highly touted in the pages of the magazine – became a reality, as did the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).¹

In America, Benjamin Spock published his childcare manifesto, *Dr. Spock's Baby and Childcare* while Alfred Kinsey shocked (and titillated) the reading public by detailing the *Sexual Behavior of the American Male*. Both would serve to create controversy and change public attitudes in major ways. Racial boundaries were also being challenged: Jackie Robinson became the first African-American major league baseball player and President Truman signed legislation ending racial segregation in the military.

War's end also brought a seismic shift in the social messages about women's

roles as productive American citizens. However, in contrast to the move toward breaking down racial boundaries, postwar gender boundaries were being shored up and rebuilt. As American soldiers (the majority of them male) returned from war, the U. S. government scrambled to make room for them as workers and primary breadwinners. Making an 180 degree turnabout from their war period stance, the government, again with the assistance of the advertising industry, began a campaign encouraging women to leave the workforce for the home-front, and to serve their family and nation through consumption.² Despite the fact that many women expressed reticence to leave their paid employment,³ the government's efforts were apparently not in vain, as women's employment rates dropped and their fertility rates rose.⁴

In the magazine industry, *Seventeen's* incredible success had not gone unnoticed, and competitors began to appear on newsstands. In April 1946, William M. Cotton, Philadelphia publisher of pulp magazines *Movie Stars*, *Movie Life*, *Personal Romances*, and *Intimate Romances*, tried to join his Philadelphia competitor Walter Annenberg in reaching out to a younger, more wholesome audience.⁵ *Deb*, Cotton's contribution to the teen magazine genre, was strikingly similar to *Seventeen* in both format and content, with articles covering fashion, fun, food, and future choices. *Deb* differed from *Seventeen*, however, in the smaller scale of its physical size, its advertiser support – and ultimately, its staying power.

Deb's entry into the teen magazine genre was noted in the February 23, 1946 issue of *Business Week*, which announced that *Deb* would “[a]dd to the growing list

of magazines directed at the younger strata of feminine society.”⁶ Foremost among that growing list was *Junior Bazaar*, the progeny of fashion magazine *Harper’s Bazaar*. *Junior Bazaar’s* “coming out” – both literal and figurative, as it first appeared as a several-page subsection of *Harper’s Bazaar* – was heralded in a four-page *Life* magazine article, as well as in a full-page ad in the bible of the fashion industry, *Women’s Wear Daily*. The ad in *WWD* introduced not just the magazine, but the magazine’s readership, to the business community:

The new young monthly magazine READY WITH the young leaders of America – Young Americans, living, learning, earning – all listening in through the fresh young pages of *Junior Bazaar*, every month beginning November, 1945. Of course you won’t meet all of them to start, but you will meet the leaders – the girls that all other girls follow in fashion, accessories and beauty. Already alert advertisers are filling the advance pages of *Junior Bazaar* to contact these influential young leaders in the big three markets – the high school girl – the college girl – the girl on the job. For the first time – under one cover, the complete Junior Fashion Market.⁷

The accompanying illustration featured a representative of each of its three target reader markets: a teen-ager, college girl, and young working woman. Although this attempt to merge the interests of three different age-ranges into one magazine set *Junior Bazaar* apart from *Seventeen*, they shared many similarities. *Junior Bazaar* was the brainchild of *Harper Bazaar’s* powerful editor-in-chief, Carmel Snow who, like Helen Valentine, received her training at Condé Nast, under the venerable *Vogue* editor-in-chief, Edna Woolman Chase.⁸ In addition, Snow drew inspiration from *Seventeen’s* incredible success, recognizing in it the great potential of the teen-age market.⁹ Snow surrounded herself with staffers who, like those at *Seventeen*, strove for excellence in all facets of *Junior’s* publication, from writing to art to

photography.¹⁰ *Junior Bazaar*, like *Seventeen*, also celebrated its birthdays; however, unlike *Seventeen*, it would not live to see its fifth. In June of 1948, *Junior Bazaar* was reintegrated into *Harper's Bazaar*, ostensibly because it diverted too much of Carmel Snow's attention away from its more profitable progenitor.¹¹ Interestingly, while *Seventeen* originally inspired *Junior Bazaar*, *Junior Bazaar* may have served as inspiration for Walter Annenberg, who insisted in 1948 that Helen Valentine – against her editorial preference – integrate features and advertising targeting the more mature, junior-size college-age crowd.¹²

Publishers of existing adolescent magazines saw the economic benefits of “growing up” and appealing to a more mature – and pocketbook carrying – readership. Beginning in 1948, *Calling All Girls* shifted its attention from its original junior high “tween” reader to *Seventeen's* market, the high school girl.¹³ In 1949, the editors made this growth spurt official, renaming the magazine *Senior Prom ... for Teens, Debs, and Co-eds*. Still, despite *Senior Prom's* inclusion of articles about college and career, new columns on shopping and romantic advice, and fiction by well-known authors such as Phyllis Whitney and Madeleine L'Engle, the two magazines differed dramatically in their aesthetics. *Senior Prom* may have jettisoned its “*Girls*,” but it retained its middle-class “real-girl” feel and look. From an artistic standpoint, *Seventeen* remained the more sophisticated, uptown girl on the block, especially after the demise of *Junior Bazaar*.

Of course, *Seventeen* had done some growing and changing of its own in the five year period between its birth and fifth birthday. Many of the original family

members were gone, including fashion editor Eleanore Hillebrand and beauty editor Irma Phorylles. Alice Thompson had made a dramatic move up the ranks, rising from writer to executive editor to publisher. In addition, Cipe Pineles had come on board as art director, changing the visual landscape of the magazine with her award-winning design style. The magazine reflected additional changes brought about by the end of the war, as well as by Walter Annenberg's increased oversight over the magazine's content, including his mandate to expand the content to include the interests of older "juniors," while limiting pictures of "negros."¹⁴

The pied pipers of *Seventeen* had been very busy in the intervening years, spreading their message beyond the walls of the magazine's New York City offices. In 1948 and 1949, they published and sold a series of 13 "Reader Service Booklets" that advised teen girls on issues often addressed in the magazine's editorial pages: appearance and fashion ("Fashion and You" and "Young Beauty"); domestic endeavors ("Food for Your Crowd," "Successful Parties," "Your Home and You," "Favorite Handknits," and "Make Your Own Gifts"); relationships ("Your Parents and You," "Everybody's Shy," "Popular Girl," and "Your New Emotions"); and vocational and avocational interests ("Choosing a Career," and "Club Notes"). In much the same way as with the magazine itself, these booklets set the parameters of the "ideal" teen girl – and then led the way through very direct how-to advice.¹⁵

Seventeen staffers also took their educational know-how to the most logical place of all: the school classroom. In 1946, they forged an alliance with home economics teachers through their creation and dissemination of a monthly home ec

supplement called “*Seventeen* in the Classroom.” Each month’s edition offered a curriculum plan that linked specific articles in *Seventeen* to topics and exercises geared toward the pedagogical needs of a variety of teachers, specifically mentioning teachers of home economics, foods and nutrition, clothing, household management, home planning, personality development, as well as guidance advisors and home economics club advisors.¹⁶

Finally, *Seventeen* took to the airwaves with the radio show, “It’s Up to Youth.” Begun in 1946, the show introduced both *Seventeen* and the “Seventeener” to a national audience. In promoting the show to their readership, *Seventeen* described it as a forum for giving both magazine and teen-agers (both girls and boys) a “voice”

Your favorite magazine has found its voice Every Wednesday evening SEVENTEEN will broadcast “IT’S UP TO YOUTH” – a program about your problems – a program that will give you and your friends a chance to say what you think. Each week a teen-age problem will be dramatized; then a panel of high school girls and boys will talk it over. Be sure to listen to your local Mutual station for “IT’S UP TO YOUTH” – the program that talks about SEVENTEENERS and gives SEVENTEENERS a chance to talk about themselves.¹⁷

Five years had passed since Baby’s first birthday and as Helen Valentine concluded at the end of her letter to the reader: “Many things have happened in five years. We know how greatly you have grown, we hope we’ve done a bit of growing too.” Just how much and in what ways had the magazine “grown” since birth? The answers lie in the magazine issues themselves.

MY, HOW YOU’VE GROWN!

This section explores the thirteen issues published from *Seventeen's* fifth birthday to sixth birthday (9/49-9/50). Just as with Chapter 3: "Seventeen at War," which looked at the period from *Seventeen's* birth to first birthday, I again investigate how Valentine's original proclaimed concerns for the reader manifested themselves in the magazine text. In addition, I look at areas of change and constancy in *Seventeen's* text from war to postwar periods. These postwar issues are of particular interest for several reasons. First, they offer a look at the early developmental period for both *Seventeen* (as a teen magazine genre) and the teen girl ideal. Second, it was during these later years that Annenberg and Valentine found themselves at odds over certain key editorial and business issues, with Annenberg (and publisher Alice Thompson) exerting more control over the creative direction of the magazine. Finally, these particular issues were created during and shaped by a period of significant socio-cultural change, as America (and Americans) shifted from world war global involvement to cold war domesticity.

Covering Postwar *Seventeen*

Seventeen's covers didn't change in any revolutionary fashion between its first and fifth birthdays, but they did reflect transformations that were taking place externally in society as well as internally at the magazine. A cursory examination reveals that the magazine retained its larger-than-average dimensions and its spare simple cover look – a look that continued as the trend for other women's magazines of the period. *Seventeen's* cost increased from 15 cents to 25 cents (this increase took place in February 1948) and, beginning in March 1950, the cover also evidenced

the magazine's availability beyond the borders of the United States, noting, in very fine print, the magazine's slightly higher purchase price of 30 cents in Canada.

Other differences become evident when looking at the entire run of covers from fifth to sixth birthday. Most notably, the end of World War II resulted in the end of *Seventeen's* war-themed covers. Gone were the signs of overt American patriotism and appeals to global citizenship; fashion now commanded center-stage. In addition, the postwar covers reflected *Seventeen's* ever-increasing variety of "special issues." During its first year, the magazine formally designated three special issues: April's "Girl Meets Boy," July's "Your America," and September's "Birthday" issue. By 1949, however, the magazine endowed more than half of its monthly issues with special themes: January's "Your School and You"; April's "Girl Meets Boy"; May's "It's All Yours"; June's "How-To-Be-Pretty"; August's "High School Fashions"; September's "Birthday" Issue; October's "Your Home and You"; and November's "Your Parents and You." The covers signaled these special issues through textual captions, but also with pointed signs, such as a locket with a picture of a mother and father for "Your Parents and You," a model lounging in a long robe for "Your Home and You," and a model carrying department store packages for "High School Fashions."

Seventeen introduced its various special issues over the five year time period between first and fifth birthdays. "Girl Meets Boy," "Birthday," and "Your Parents and You" debuted in 1945; "It's All Yours" (an annual almost totally teen reader-created issue) and "Back to School Fashions" in 1947; "Young Beauty" and "Your

School and You" in 1948; and "Your Home and You" in 1949. Two other special issues, "Your America" (7/45) and "New York City's Golden Anniversary" (1/48), were anomalous one-time occurrences specifically tied to certain events (WWII and New York City's anniversary), rather than the ongoing "activities" of conducting relationships (with parents and boys), shopping, and beautifying (standard fare within the magazine, and particularly salient with the advertising).

The evolution of the special issues reflected, to some extent, parallel changes in society. After WWII, *Seventeen's* attention shifted from global and national citizenship concerns to more individual-level teen concerns, such as school, appearance and – increasingly, as the 1950's unfolded – home and domesticity. Thus, the covers of these special issues illustrated the concerns of a changing America. One interesting trend in women's magazines and the fashion industry was the evolution of modeling as a prestigious occupation for women. *Seventeen* reflected this trend when it began to identify not just the photographer but also the model in its inside cover acknowledgment in June 1950. That model, 14-year-old Gay Scott, was the first *Seventeen* model mentioned by name elsewhere in the magazine, when she was spotlighted in the December 1949 "They Worked with Us this Month" column.¹⁸

The "look" of *Seventeen's* cover models changed slightly from 1945 to 1949, but in mostly superficial, fashion-oriented ways. When stripped of the ever-changing veil of couture, these ideal "Teena" representatives, with their glowing fair skin, clear eyes, shiny smooth hair, and straight white teeth, remained paragons of classic white

Western beauty. Perhaps the most obvious beauty transformation occurred not in dresses, but in tresses, as young American women marched into their neighborhood beauty parlors for the must-have cut of the season – the short bob.¹⁹

The “bob” appears to have been more than just a type of hairstyle, functioning as a female body signal for America’s postwar fascination with its own perceived modernity. Ten of the 13 covers between *Seventeen*’s fifth and sixth birthdays featured models with bobbed hair; of these, the January 1950 “Your School and You” cover best illustrates this symbolic relationship between body and society. Featuring two girls engaged in conversation at the bottom of a long set of concrete school steps, the cover used their clothing and hair to contrast tradition (circa 1900) and modernity (1950). The representative of the turn-of-the-century has long dark hair controlled by a braid, a bow, *and* a hat, wears a floor-length dress and carries her large textbooks in a bookstrap. Her companion, in contrast, represents the very picture of a thoroughly modern miss. Sporting a short bob and a knee-length jumper, she carries a notebook and small textbook in the crook of her arm. Everything about the “modern” girl’s appearance signals freedom from encumbrances – especially in relation to her archaic counterpart. Still, some feminine “encumbrances,” such as the beauty mandate, remain constant, regardless of a woman’s time period.²⁰ The inside cover acknowledgment makes this clear, gently reminding: “To look pretty for school is still as much in style as it was in 1900!”²¹

Art director Cipe Pinele’s hand can be seen in the detail of this picture; the “traditional” model wears an historically-accurate time period dress, courtesy of the

Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Unlike most of *Seventeen's* previous covers, however, this one is not the work of Francesco Scavullo. While under contract at the magazine, Scavullo photographed many of the inside fashion spreads and most of the covers (42 between November 1944 and September 1949). As time progressed, however, other photographers joined Scavullo in shaping the look of the magazine and the Teena ideal. In the year between the fifth and sixth birthdays, Scavullo photographed only three covers, his last in March, 1950; the remaining ten were photographed by five other photographers, including one woman, Tana Hoban.

Still, at least while Helen Valentine edited *Seventeen*, the all-important birthday covers were always entrusted to Scavullo. The sumptuous September 1949 Fifth Birthday cover perfectly exemplified the early look" of Scavullo's work and of *Seventeen's* covers/cover girls. [See Figure 5, Appendix B]. Two young women, a brunette and a blond, lean forward to blow out the 17 candles on a birthday cake, their red bow mouths puckered in preparation. The pale ecru background sets off their porcelain complexions and the varying shades of pink, from tablecloth to cake to sweetly bowed party frocks, create a visual cotton candy confection. The gauzy, dreamy feel of the picture – a signature of Scavullo's work at *Seventeen* – offsets any saccharinity; instead, the picture exudes sophisticated elegance. As a confectioner in cover Candyland, Scavullo was a master craftsman.

Mapping the Text

Seventeen's size, measured by number of pages, more than doubled – and for

some issues, tripled – between birth and sixth birthday. The first issue weighed in at 91 pages, the First Birthday issue at 171 pages. The Fifth Birthday issue grew to 247 pages, and the August 1950 “High School Fashions” issue contained a whopping 299 pages.²² This growth can be attributed to two intervening and related economic influences: the end of the war and an increase in advertising. The magazine’s most dramatic growth spurt occurred in 1946, when the U.S. government lifted WWII paper restrictions, allowing *Seventeen* to fill as many pages as it could. Advertising-based growth, on the other hand, took place at a less dramatic pace. In addition, advertising increases and decreases were highly correlated with specific months and certain special issues. *Seventeen*’s largest issues were those that were most advertiser-friendly; thus, the August “Back to School” issues, with their focus on clothing and shopping, generally had the most pages and the highest ratio of advertising to editorial copy. Conversely, the smallest issues were the summer issues, which focused on leisure pursuits and featured far fewer fashion spreads and much lower advertising ratios. The differences in issue content and issue size throughout a year’s run were quite noticeable, provoking at least one reader to write a letter of complaint about the dearth of fashion coverage in the July 1950 issue. The editors used that opportunity to educate the reader(ship) on the business basics of women’s magazine publishing:

We hope most of you had fun with our “summer fun” issue. Perhaps we should explain how the fashion business works. The July issue of any magazine is low in fashion pages, simply because there are very few clothes made to sell in July. The manufacturers are busy working on their fall lines; stores push ‘sale’ merchandise in July. But, as you can see from our August

and September issues, we've rounded up big back-to-school fashion wardrobes for you.²³

Of course, readers, editors, and advertisers alike recognized *Seventeen* as a fashion magazine, but editor-in-chief Helen Valentine also conceived it as a service magazine. As Valentine stressed in her September 1944 introductory letter to the reader,²⁴ *Seventeen* would cover fashion – but also beauty and health, self-in-relation to others, the life of the mind, and leisure activities in a rather equitable way. To a great extent, Valentine's rhetoric matched *Seventeen*'s early reality, as measured by its first year editorial content. In this chapter, I again examine the relationship between Valentine's original editorial pledge and *Seventeen*'s actual editorial proportions, this time for the period between fifth and sixth birthdays. I also qualitatively examine the editorial coverage during this period, comparing it to the earlier period.

The most obvious editorial change between first and fifth birthdays occurred with *Seventeen*'s introduction of a new Table of Contents category, "Food and Home Doings" in November 1946. Creating a new category had a rather dramatic effect on the editorial proportions among the existing Table of Contents categories. At *Seventeen*, opening up space for articles in the new category, "Food and Home Doings," necessitated taking space away from others. From fifth to sixth birthday, *Seventeen* devoted the majority of its editorial space to "What You Wear," "Having Fun," and "Fiction," followed by the new category of "Food and Home Doings" [See Table 3, Appendix C]. In contrast, it devoted the least amount of space to "How You

Look and Feel, "Getting Along in the World," and "Your Mind." Indeed, of all the pre-existing Table of Contents categories, these latter two were the most profoundly and adversely affected by the addition of the new "Food and Home Doings" category.

As happened with the first year's issues, the amount of space that *Seventeen* allotted to its various Table of Contents categories shifted in relation to special issues and certain seasons. However, this effect diminished over time, as fashion began to dominate the magazine. Not surprisingly, the August 1950 "High School Fashions" issue had the greatest proportion of "What You Wear" features, making up a third of the magazine's editorial copy that month. Conversely, this same issue was almost devoid of articles about "Getting Along in the World." "Having Fun" was the other dominant category during this time period, and articles under this rubric had the highest percentage of space allotment in four different issues, including the aforementioned July 1950 "summer fun" issue, which offered "over 20 pages of things to make and do" to fill the void of the missing fashion spreads.

Only once did articles in a Table of Contents category other than "What You Wear" and "Having Fun" make up the largest percentage of textual space during this period, and that anomaly occurred in the January 1950 "Your School" issue in which "Getting Along in the World" led – but with "What You Wear" close behind. Not surprisingly, articles about "Food and Home Doings" hit their highest percentage in the "Your Home" issue, while articles about "How You Look and Feel" hit their all time high in the "How-to-be-Pretty" issue. However, "What You Wear" features spatially dominated both special issues.

Change not only occurred *between* Table of Contents categories from first to fifth birthday, but also *within* categories, in ways both superficial and significant. Examining the articles and features of each Table of Contents category during this postwar period reveals both stability and transformation in *Seventeen's* discourse. When change did occur, it often mirrored external cultural shifts in America, or reflected internal editorial debates among the magazine's creators.

What You Wear

Directives from both the business and editorial sides of *Seventeen* led to notable changes in the magazine's fashion pages. Against Helen Valentine's wishes and original intent, owner Walter Annenberg decided that expanding *Seventeen's* readership to include college-age women would increase the magazine's profitability. To that end, he ordered Valentine to expand the magazine's editorial fashion pages, previously reserved for teen size wear, to include junior size clothing. Valentine balked, Annenberg prevailed, and *Seventeen's* fashion pages began to include junior attire in 1948.²⁵ "Chubbie" sized clothing, on the other hand, remained an anomaly in *Seventeen*, receiving coverage in only 2 of 175 fashion features for the time period. The titles – "On the Slimming Side"²⁶ and "To Slim You Down,"²⁷ – reveal the magazine's attitude toward the "chubbie" body type.

Art director Cipe Pineles also made her mark on *Seventeen's* postwar fashion pages. In the magazine's first year of publication, art director Jan Balet relied upon Francesco Scavullo and a handful of other male photographers for the magazine's photographic layouts. Pineles, on the other hand, enlisted the assistance of a wide

array of photographers and illustrators, both up-and-coming and established, many of them women and people of color. The result: fashion pages that often broke the mold of convention, diverse in look but united under an umbrella of creativity, artistry and quality.²⁸

Changes in the American culture, however, had the most profound affect on the fashion pages in *Seventeen* – or more precisely, in the fashions depicted in the fashion pages. Two words best describe the fashion trend in women's clothing of the postwar period: domesticity and romance. At *Seventeen*, home and hearth, the bastion of domesticity, served as common backdrops for the young women models, who often sported pjs. Indeed, although pajamas were rarely featured in *Seventeen's* war period fashion pages, they became a postwar period fashion staple. Appearing in fashion features in more than half of the magazine issues of this time period, models wearing jammies even graced the covers of two issues: "You and Your Home" and "How to Be Pretty." Among all the fashion photos taken in home settings, those featuring fleece robes, frilly nighties, and flannel pj's best signified the cozy warmth of the 1950's domestic ideal.

In addition, the fashion transition from relaxed, informal, and menswear-inspired clothing of the war-period to the form-fitting, formal and feminine attire of the post-war period, foreshadowed in *Seventeen's* August 1945 issue, was complete by 1949. Concurrently – and relatedly – boys moved from background to foreground in the magazine's fashion pages. In fact, in 1949/50, the driving fashion question in *Seventeen* seemed to have become: "What do boys like?" The answer – found in the

caption of the feature, “Boys Like Floaty Party Sheers” – was: “Dresses like these [that] make a girl look so much like a girl.”²⁹ And although boys may have preferred dresses, they apparently had an opinion to express on all manner of girls’ clothing. Another feature “The Boys Speak Up” queried young men on their views “about graduation dresses; about organdy; about denim and such.” In case the reader didn’t fully appreciate the significance of male approval, *Seventeen* laid it on the line:

All the clothes on these and the following six pages were put up for inspection before perhaps the most discriminating, and certainly one of the most important, audiences in the world: boys. Our all-male audience was made up of the teen-age lower classmen at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at King’s Point, Long Island. Their smiling faces, and the comments they made, tip off the happy ending to our story.³⁰

Boys influenced girls’ postwar clothing choices in less direct ways, too.

Although *Seventeen* still featured school clothing, especially in the August and September issues, clothing to be worn *after* school dominated the postwar period fashion spreads. Particularly popular were dresses for dates, dances and parties – venues and events where boys were present and, for the most part, *the point*. In fact, teen life in 1950, as seen through the lens of *Seventeen*’s fashion pages, was one fun-filled party, populated by boys in suits and girls in tea dresses with tiny cinched waists that showed off their hourglass figures.³¹

Of course, not all feminine figures follow the form of an hourglass, which created an opening for another fashion trend of the 1950’s: foundation wear (bras and girdles). Meriting only a couple of mentions in 1944/45 *Seventeen*, undergarments became *de rigueur* in 1949/50, featured in every issue of the magazine. Often, the

relationship between the form-fitting fashions of the period and the need for proper undergarments was only inferred, but sometimes it was spelled out, as in the feature, “A Better Figure for You,” which pragmatically described its garments as: “Three long-wearing cotton bras, three light nylon girdles to make your clothes look nicer.”³² Bodily control was the ultimate goal of these figure-formers and the girls who wore them. As the feature “Get Into Shape” simply stated: “Everything’s under control – figuratively speaking – when you wear any of these girdles and bras.”³³ In ways both metaphorical and material, the 1950 body modeled the broader cultural ideal of control as a “good thing.”³⁴

At the same time that American women were being called upon to control their bodies in 1950's America, they were also being asked to loosen up their spending and become “Purchaser [as] Citizens.”³⁵ As America moved into the postwar era, the hard-fought freedom of the war years began to be equated with the freedom to spend.³⁶ One fashion trend in the pages of postwar *Seventeen* seemed to emerge in response to this new consumer mandate and the rising disposable income of most Americans: the accessory. Just as in the case of pajamas and undergarments, accessories went from fashion afterthought during the war to a fashion necessity in the postwar period. Hardly meriting mention in 1944/45 *Seventeen*, accessories became an important part of the fashion landscape in 1949/50 *Seventeen*, covered in multiple features in every issue of magazine during the period. Adorning the body with “Those Little Touches”³⁷ – everything from socks, stockings, shoes, slippers, hats, gloves, watches, jewelry, and even luggage – became the norm; utilitarian

garments alone would no longer suffice. In particular, *Seventeen* considered the buying of jewelry an important enough endeavor to devote an entire article to the how-to's of assessing and collecting wearable gems.³⁸

With all this attention to party attire and the bling to wear with it, it would be easy to get the impression that *Seventeen* was now encouraging a new era of conspicuous consumption, but it was not that clear-cut. Features that extolled the value of frugality and thoughtful consumption continued relatively unabated from the first year, and the two messages existed together, sometimes somewhat incongruously, sometimes in accord, as threads in the same textual tapestry.³⁹ However, frugality as a fashion goal did appear to be on the wane. For example, in listing "Some Good Reasons to Sew Your Own," the magazine mentions individuality and wardrobe coordination, ignoring any cost-saving benefits.⁴⁰

How You Feel and Look

The articles of postwar "How You Feel and Look" continued to offer a strong, stable, and direct flow of information about the critical relationship between body maintenance, product consumption, and heterosexual romance. In fact, the articles that appeared under this rubric seem to have been the least affected by either staffing changes or socio-cultural shifts. Apparently, beauty was (and is) an American girl's duty, regardless of time period.⁴¹

The Table of Contents ordering of "What You Wear" (first) and "How You Feel and Look" (second) was a logical one, as the first dictated the second. Thus, as the trend in women's clothing moved from loose fitting war-time attire to form-fitting

postwar apparel, it begat a parallel transformation with the female body ideal. In the beauty pages of *Seventeen*, articles began touting diet and exercise as body sculpting strategies for those girls whose figures didn't naturally accommodate the nipped waists of the postwar party dress. While articles in 1944/45 *Seventeen* referred on occasion to diet and exercise, it was always in the context of health and vitality, suggesting that girls eat nutritious meals and get lots of exercise from playing sports and general activity. By 1949/50, however, a subtle change had developed, and the emphasis became one of aesthetics – of improving the look of the body in order to best show off the clothes that adorned it. So, for example, the article “Scale That Figure Down,”⁴² described dieting as “what you have to do to get thin,” the result of which would be you “look[ing] slim and pretty in your new spring clothes!”⁴³ Another article, “Posture Perfect?” addressed the relationship of fashion to body control, warning that “even the prettiest clothes won't help if you stand in a slump, walk in a slouch, sit in a heap.”⁴⁴ In addition, what constituted “exercise” changed from generalized activity (including sports) to the specific activity of calisthenics and stretching, as set out in the article “Figure on These.”⁴⁵

Apparently, some girls got the slim and trim message, only too well. Although *Seventeen's* beauty editor Jean Campbell wrote about eating to *gain* weight in “Pad That Frame,”⁴⁶ her article was accompanied by a fashion spread with a caption that read that a “skin-and-bones girl can look wonderful.”⁴⁷ The latter prompted reader “Sorry-too-late Sue” to write in and ask:

But can she *feel* wonderful? Last year I became obsessed with the idea of

looking like a fashion model. I got to normal measurements by exercise, to model's measurements by sheer starvation – I fasted for days at a time. I was often sick, found it hard to breathe, now believe I wasted a whole year of my life. I hope other girls who read this won't ruin their health as I did mine!⁴⁸

Seventeen answered Sue, adamantly stating:

We, too, found it hard to breathe when we read your letter! We sincerely hope that your suicidal starvation did no permanent damage; that you've fully recovered from your wish to look like someone else (see "Who's a Dummy?" on page 50). Although a 'skin-and-bones' girl can improve her looks temporarily with the right clothes, she should, of course, work to "Pad That Frame."⁴⁹

"Who's a Dummy?" the article to which *Seventeen's* response referred, was also written by Campbell and did indeed offer a somewhat counter-hegemonic message. Questioning teen girls' criticism of their own bodies, "Dummy" asked them to consider their physical uniqueness and to reject attempts to become "anonymous copycats" (ironically disparaging a basic tenet of *Seventeen's* promotional campaign, that "Teena is a copycat").⁵⁰ However, it was somewhat less than a radical departure from the standard beauty ideology as Campbell also rationalized that the desire "to be prettier than we are at the moment, both to please ourselves and the men (eventually the man) in our lives" was a "natural female desire" and advised girls to "make ourselves prettier, but [...] within the boundaries of our own given frames."⁵¹

The bulk of advice that *Seventeen* meted out on body maintenance, however, continued to be about its care and grooming. Every issue contained detailed "how-to" advice on grooming, covering such topics as applying make-up,⁵² giving a home permanent,⁵³ caring for feet,⁵⁴ and the vital necessity of wearing deodorant.⁵⁵ As presented in *Seventeen*, grooming as a whole body regimen involved piecing out

individual body regions, assessing each and every facet, and then applying some sort of solution – most often through the use of a product of a some kind. *Seventeen's* 1950 special issue, "How to Be Pretty," answered the question, "What Makes a Pretty Girl?"⁵⁶ by identifying the body's grooming parameters. The resulting eight articles, "Your Face ... Its Care, Its Trimming,"⁵⁷ "Your Hair,"⁵⁸ "Your Fragrance,"⁵⁹ "Your Hands,"⁶⁰ "Your Feet,"⁶¹ "You Can't Be Almost Clean,"⁶² and "These [products] Make a Pretty Girl,"⁶³ offered an excellent illustration of grooming as an entire system of related tasks.⁶⁴

Finally, the introduction in February 1949 of the intermittently-occurring column, "Dear Beauty Editor," opened up the topic of beauty to discussion between *Seventeen's* readers and editors. Readers sent in questions about their health and beauty "problems"(covering a vast area of concerns, including hair, skin, makeup and menstruation), and the editors answered with advice, which often fell into three categories: accept it, ask your doctor, or use this product. The dialogue, however, left one reader dissatisfied; her letter of complaint revealed the unspoken parameter of *Seventeen's* body ideal:

Dear Beauty Editor:

I read your magazine every month and think it's wonderful. I am sixteen and a junior in high school. I want to know why you never give Negro girls suggestions on cosmetics, how to care for hair, colors we should use, etc. We teenagers want to look our best, too.⁶⁵

Seventeen's editor responded, offering faint empathy and a rather unapologetic rationalization:

Your concern that Negro teenagers do not receive sufficient guidance in

beauty, health and grooming problems is understandable. However, SEVENTEEN doesn't like to think that Negro girls feel neglected or overlooked when it carries articles on these subjects. These articles contain, for the most part, information on cleanliness and appearance that apply to all our readers. We have tried to touch on the universal (or more accurately, the usual) problems that are likely to affect all teen-agers. We had hoped that our general features contained enough specific information so that girls, whether blonde, brunette, redhead or Negro, might find help for their own individual problems.⁶⁶

Although the editor went on to provide beauty-care suggestions particularly suited to African American women, her response illuminated what was likely invisible to any reader not of color: the "universal" body, according to and addressed by *Seventeen*, was white.

Getting Along in the World

An interesting thing happened to "the world" in the postwar pages of *Seventeen* – it shrunk (at least as measured by geographical coverage as well as by space devoted to it as a category). Not coincidentally, "getting along in it" increasingly became about getting along with boys. Indeed, the articles that fell under this rubric represented a major discursive shift in *Seventeen*, as the magazine's editorial ideology moved away from the progressive feminist gender role discourse of the war-period to a more traditional masculinist gender role discourse in the postwar period.⁶⁷ This shift took place in the magazine's text as a whole, but the "Getting Along in the World" section is of particular interest because this was a site where the two discourses met and fought for prominence, sometimes finding a negotiated middle-ground, and sometimes co-existing as polar opposites in an incongruous forced marriage.

In its first year, *Seventeen's* pages were dominated by a feminist model of gender roles (i.e., pro-careerist and anti-housewifery), perfectly exemplified by Alice Thompson's introductory "For Seniors Only" column, in which she warned the reader that "A marriage license is no longer a stay-at-home guarantee. Your only real security is what you go out and get for yourself."⁶⁸ During that war period, Thompson and other writers regularly portrayed homemaking not as a career, but instead as one of many day-to-day tasks of life, done in addition to (not as opposed to) paid employment. Work, on the other hand, meant a career, something done for pay. The turning point in this discourse occurred in November 1948, when *Seventeen* published an article by anthropologist Margaret Mead (ironically, herself a working woman), entitled, "Can Homemaking Really Be a Career?" (Mead's answer? A resounding "Yes"!)." ⁶⁹

While the pro-work discourse didn't completely disappear from *Seventeen's* postwar issues, the number of articles promoting careers declined, the "world" of employment choices became smaller, and the types of jobs touted began to toe the (high-heeled) line of standard feminine fare. For example, four of the seven articles specifically about future work options detailed careers in typical female arenas, including home decorating ("Wizardry in Four Walls"⁷⁰), retail sales ("Rising in Retailing"⁷¹), the beauty industry ("Beauty is BIG BUSINESS"⁷²), and clerical work ("On Minding Your KEYS and Cues"⁷³). The remaining three articles on work appeared less gender-stereotypical, detailing the work of humanitarian nonprofit agencies ("You, Too, Can Work for Something"⁷⁴), the banking industry ("Finance:

Feminine Gender”⁷⁵), and medical laboratory technicians (“Labs and Lassies”⁷⁶). However, even within the more progressive career articles of the postwar period, there were signs of the more traditionalist model. For example, “Labs and Lassies” lamented the low pay of an otherwise challenging science career, and then quoted a male hospital administrator, who rationalized the economic disparity:

There’s an attraction to working in modern laboratories with modern methods, moving ahead the barriers that block so much of our understanding. And then, too,” he adds with a grin, “there’s an attraction to the medical students – must be, or the girls wouldn’t date and marry them the way they do.”⁷⁷

Indeed, *Seventeen*, as it ventured further and further into the postwar era, increasingly promoted marriage and male approval, cornerstones of the traditional/masculinist model of gender relations. Thus, 1945’s “If Only He Could Cook” was replaced in 1950 with “Bake Him a Pie.” In 1945, “Jobs Have No Gender” argued that the division of household labor should be equitably distributed among a home’s “citizens,” but five years later, “Who Does Your Laundry?” seemed to *expect* a gendered division of labor, stating:

When daughters get to be teen-age, they should be of some help. If your mother does all her own laundry, you’ve probably assumed your rightful position as her helper long since.⁷⁸

While in 1945, advice on “What’s a girl to do/wear/say” came filtered through a feminist/humanist/citizenship paradigm, in 1950, it was quite often filtered through the perspective of “what a boy likes.” A new column that debuted in the 1950 “Girl Meets Boy” issue, entitled “From A Boy’s Perspective and written by 21-year-old Peter Leavy, best exemplified this shift. Writing in a tone laden with authority and

often dripping with sarcasm and disrespect, Leavy delivered monthly lectures on male-female relations to *Seventeen's* readership. His address to *Seventeen's* predominantly young women readers in his very first column set the stage for columns to come:

You girls, I'm convinced, must all belong to the same club. And your meetings must consist largely of sitting around and standardizing your plans for entangling us unwary males. I know it's true, because as soon as a fellow shows any affection toward you, to the last girl, you jump, or rather leap, to the conclusion that you must be *the* woman in his life.⁷⁹

In a couple of columns subcaptioned "Somebody Would Like to Meet You"⁸⁰ and "Just the Way You Look Tonight,"⁸¹ Leavy schooled *Seventeen's* readership on the physical attributes and body adornment that boys found attractive in girls. Face it, he told them:

Whether you like it or not, it's a fact of life. When a fellow takes a girl out, the better she looks, the more he'll enjoy himself. Naturally, it's nicer to be able to look across the table at someone pleasing to the eye. And, if his date elicits admiring glances from the surrounding gentry, a guy feels flattered in the bargain.⁸²

Leavy's column – and the gender relations shift that it represented – did not go unchallenged by *Seventeen's* readership. Young men and women alike wrote to complain, including L.F., a male reader who referred to Leavy as "the critic [who] raises his ugly head."⁸³ *Seventeen* even followed Leavy's August 1950 column with a disclaimer of sorts, noting: "The Editors of *SEVENTEEN* believe we can all afford to listen to a boy's point of view, but we hope you realize that it isn't always our point of view."⁸⁴ The important point, however, was that even if "A Boy's Point of View" didn't represent the viewpoint of some/most/or all of *Seventeen's* editors, they chose

to continue it, keeping Leavy at the helm. Worse yet, the magazine would soon discontinue “For Seniors Only,” the column that had historically promoted and disseminated some of *Seventeen*’s most progressive messages about gender relations. Thus, in the battle of the gender paradigms that took place in the “Getting Along in the World” section of 1950 *Seventeen*, tradition appeared to have overtaken progressiveness in a march toward domination.

Your Mind

While the postwar era brought about significant change in *Seventeen*’s advice to the reader on “Getting Along in the World,” the greatest transformation occurred in the magazine’s (in)attention to her “Mind.” During its first year, *Seventeen* had extravagantly padded its intellectually-meaty “Your Mind” section with articles on world politics, geography, and history, many suffused with passionate exaltations on universal brotherhood and equality. By 1949, however, “Your Mind” had been decimated, reduced to a skeleton of monthly columns.

To a great extent, this change can be linked to the end of World War II and the resultant shift in national attention from the world stage to the domestic front. At *Seventeen*, citizens and workers were out, homemakers and hostesses were in. One sign of this occurred when, almost immediately after war’s end, *Seventeen* moved the column “Teens in the News” from “Your Mind” to “Having Fun” – in effect, signaling a subtle shift in what the magazine (and perhaps society in general) deemed newsworthy in regard to exemplary teen behavior.

In addition, the war period column, “Science and Medicine” was discontinued,

eventually replaced by an intermittently-occurring column, "Science ... and You." This transposition in *Seventeen's* science columns offers an exemplary illustration of a greater societal shift, one that asked women to move from wartime workers to postwar consumers. Indeed, although the titles of these two columns make them sound strikingly similar, they were, in actuality, vastly different. While the monthly installments of "Science and Medicine" suggested job possibilities in those fields, "Science ... and You" (penned by Barbara Hertz, Helen Valentine's daughter) highlighted new products made available through modern science and technology (e.g., Dramamine, canned milk, Pantastic, electric hairbrushes, neomycin, Vitamin B12, etc.). Thus, although the former offered the reader a world of occupational opportunities, the latter merely offered her "new and improved!" buying opportunities.

Seventeen didn't completely abandon the more cerebral content of "Your Mind," continuing to publish reader's letters, monthly book reviews, the reader-produced writing and art of "It's All Yours," and occasional educational articles about science and art. For the most part, however, "Your Mind" of the postwar period lost much of its discursive power, ceding space and significance to the magazine's new postwar section: "Food and Home Doings."

Food and Home Doings

Almost immediately upon war's end, *Seventeen* moved "home" from background to forefront, according domestic subject matter, once integrated throughout the magazine, its own Table of Contents category. Debuting in November

1946, “Home Doings” expanded to “Food and Home Doings” in January 1947.

During the period from fifth to sixth birthday, *Seventeen* devoted more editorial space to “Food and Home Doings” than to “Getting Along in the World,” “Your Mind,” or “How You Look and Feel,” but less than to “Having Fun,” “What You Wear,” or “Fiction” [See Table 3, Appendix C]. In several ways, “Food and Home Doings” had much in common with the sections “How You Look and Feel” and “What You Wear.” First, features in each of these sections consistently doled out very pointed advice to “You” on the “how to” of certain tasks (how you should groom, how you should dress, how you should home-make). In addition, the underlying foundation of each of these sections, whether subtly or overtly indicated, was heterosexual romance, either now (dating) or in the future (marriage). Finally, the subjects of each of these sections (clothing, grooming, home) were tightly related to a mandate to consume, with success in each of these areas often achieved by buying something.

Seventeen’s special October 1949 “Your Home and You” issue, not surprisingly, contained the highest percentage of editorial copy on “Food and Home Doings.” The frontispiece essay for that particular issue offers a good entry point for a discursive examination, as it essentially set out the parameters for what *Seventeen* considered a “home.”⁸⁵ The accompanying frontispiece portrait created the ambience for the essay. It pictured a young blond woman sitting cross-legged in a living room, reading the newspaper comics, and surrounded by the comforts of home: a cozy overstuffed chair to her right, a coffee table topped with flowers and books to her left, and behind her a looming stone fireplace, crackling fire warming the room and its

inhabitant. The essay begins:

You probably don't think about it much. Your home, we mean. You probably take it for granted. It's there –it's comfortable–it's familiar. It's just home [...but] home is a lot more than a roof over your head.

Seventeen immediately establishes that home is “comfortable” – and that comfort is made up of several elements. For instance, the reader is reminded that home means *family* – which includes “you” (a daughter), a mom, a dad, and at least one sibling:

Home is the chair dad sat on too hard three Thanksgivings ago. It's the masterpiece you painted at the age of four which *still* hangs in mother's room [...] It's your Prom-date calling for you with a corsage. And your brother giving you both the clammy eye.

Home is where women cook (for men):

It's dashing back from school into the warm, spicy kitchen and telling mother you've been elected to the student council [...] It's dad valiantly swallowing down your first (hard-as-rock) angel cake and exclaiming, “it's delicious!”

Home is where “you” entertain friends:

It's Polly coming over to spend the night and do homework and try out hairdos [...] Home is the gang dropping in, rolling up the rugs and dancing.

And finally, home is for *Things*:

Home is your collection of books and records and Things [...] Your home and you? Well, when you come to think of it, home is many things ...and all pretty wonderful at that.

The features of “Food and Home Doings” addressed each and every facet of the home as *Seventeen* constructed it, including the tasks of home-making, from dining to decorating to domesticating. And in postwar *Seventeen*, home was definitely a woman's (separate) sphere, its tasks the exclusive work of women.

Judging from the amount of space allotted to its instruction, *Seventeen* apparently considered food preparation the prominent home-making task. Articles such as “To Market, To Market,”⁸⁶ taught the rudimentary basics of properly choosing food, and tutorials on recipe terms,⁸⁷ herbs and spices,⁸⁸ and beginning cooking tips⁸⁹ helped arm even the most inexperienced novice with the culinary basics, readying her to enter the kitchen and cook – for herself, her family, her beau, and her friends.

Interestingly, *Seventeen* often presented breakfast and lunch as meals that young women should prepare for themselves, linking these two meals with health and beauty. For instance, “Why Breakfast?”⁹⁰ described “the first meal of the day” as “a real beauty treatment,” while “Bring It in a Basket,”⁹¹ suggested lunch menus, including one for “weight-watchers.” Most of time, however, *Seventeen* highlighted dishes that teen girls could make for others. Cooking features frequently encouraged girls to “Practice on the Family,”⁹² begging the question, practice for what? (Answer: to perfect your domestic labor for your *future* family). According to the magazine, cooking for other people required divining their desires, and *Seventeen* offered itself as the voice of experience, confidently advising on just what to make for whom. In “Family Favorites,”⁹³ for example, they suggested specific recipes for each member of the family (mom, dad, brother, sister), while another feature asserted that “Every Family Likes... Pancakes.”⁹⁴ *Seventeen*’s culinary clairvoyance extended to the preferences of teen boys, about whom they advised, “Bake Him a Pie,”⁹⁵ sharing their knowledge that, “Whether he’s six or sixty, ‘most any man will pick a pie as his favorite dessert.” Presentation mattered too, so “A Box Social,”⁹⁶ offered hints on

creating a “beau-catching” box to hold his lunch.

Seventeen also devoted a significant amount of advice to the art and science of party-giving. Every issue of the magazine during the 1949/50 period included multiple articles about hostessing successful parties. Parties could be related to holidays or birthdays, but more often than not, *Seventeen* presented them as an opportunity to get “the gang” together for some fun. The monthly feature, “Every Crowd Likes...” suggested party foods and recipes for every month of the year, from frozen custard in August to hot cross buns in April to fried chicken in July. *Seventeen* advised on every possible facet of the party giving experience, from themes to menus to recipes to party games; one article “Party Lifesavers”⁹⁷ even included suggestions on (and buying information for) appropriate party attire.

Cooking articles like clothing features, were almost always accompanied by buying information, including product brand names. For example, in the feature, “Simple but Super,” the recipe for butternut cream pie called for “Amazo Instant Dessert Mix” specifically, the peanut butter cookies included “Bisquick” and the ice-box roll called for “Baker’s Cocoa Mix.”⁹⁸ At the end of articles on party desserts⁹⁹ and a rodeo theme party,¹⁰⁰ the magazine even touted a specific grocery chain, encouraging readers to shop at their local IGA. Often, the magazine sang the praises of convenience foods, which they equated with modernity. Gelatin, canned soup, and frozen juice concentrate all found favor as valuable time-savers in many of the magazine’s recipes. However, *Seventeen* lavished its highest praise on “luncheon meat,” including “Spam,” that now oft-disparaged mystery-meat product which back

then apparently epitomized the modern culinary product. In “Plan a Picnic,” the magazine extolled its virtues– as a shish-kabob ingredient, specifically, and as a food product, more generally:

[...] make the shish-kabab of luncheon meat (as we did). Why? Because it's all done up in its own hermetically sealed can (ready and willing to keep until you say the word and wind the key or use the can opener). Which means it travels better than any other food item of its sort, keeps its pristine freshness no matter how hot the weather is, comes out of its tin jacket firm and easy to handle.¹⁰¹

Another article in the same issue emphatically implored the reader to “Open a Can” of this miracle meat and its various relatives:

Luncheon meat they call it ... we call it convenient food [...] Whether you want a party snack or a man-sized meal, you can make it with canned meats. There are dozens of varieties to choose from... frankfurters, Vienna sausages, tongue, sandwich spreads [...] Take luncheon meats (those pressed loaves made of chopped pork, ham, beef and/or veal): see on our make-believe store across the page some of the variations you can ring up and dish out when you *open a can!*¹⁰²

While *Seventeen* presented cooking as a significant part of running a home, it also addressed other tasks, including decorating. As with cooking, the advice that *Seventeen* shared on decorating had a “now and later” quality. *Now* you can decorate your bedroom to match your age (“Your Room Comes of Age”¹⁰³) or your favorite painting (“Plan from a Picture”¹⁰⁴). *Now* you can make your small bedroom feel bigger (“small rooms and how they GROW”¹⁰⁵) or more private – despite having to share it with your sister (“Bird's-eye View of Two to a Room”¹⁰⁶). Always looming in the distance, however, was the vision of your own future home. Thus, your bedroom could multi-task as “Your OWN Living Room”¹⁰⁷ while waiting for one's

future abode.

Although some decorating articles did suggest a level of frugality by reusing/renovating already existing objects, they were not the norm.¹⁰⁸ Instead, most highlighted the “must have” accouterments of a modern home, giving specific decor suggestions, example pictures, and buying information for every product either listed or pictured, from rugs to mattresses to linens to clocks. In the feature, “A Good Night’s Rest,”¹⁰⁹ *Seventeen* attributed this service as the result of reader demand, stating: “When you saw this bedroom for the first time in our July 1949 issue, you wrote to us, in droves, that *you’d* bounce up and down, too, if it were only yours.”

Evidently, achieving the modern home required buying the most recent technological advances in household products. New tools and gadgets, it seems, were the household equivalent to the modern culinary necessity of Spam. In February 1947, *Seventeen* introduced an intermittently occurring column devoted to the education of their readership on this topic, entitled “Does Your House Need This?” This column detailed suggested household “necessities” such as: an alarm clock, Dritz lampshade kit, Mouli rotary steel grater, egg poacher, and Pyrex ware. *Seventeen’s* promotional literature often suggested to advertisers that “Teenage” could influence their parents’ product consumption,¹¹⁰ and this appears to be the strategy of this column, which overtly suggested in its Christmas version that “Mom would love one [toaster, radio, waffle iron, vacuum, coffee percolator] for Christmas, from all of you.”¹¹¹

Other times, however, *Seventeen* clearly suggested that the reader buy certain

products in preparation for her assumed future life as a homemaker. This was the territory of the monthly column, “Your Treasure Chest,” which debuted in August 1949. “Your Treasure Chest” referred to a hope chest, the wildly popular, decidedly feminine furniture necessity of the period, meant to hold a young woman’s “hope” for the future. The following passage from the column’s first installment pinpoints that ultimate hope as a home, which could then be filled with myriad purchasable commodities. Interestingly, the abstract and non-commercial benefits of marriage, such as love and family, receive no mention:

Although it’s too soon to do any more than dream of the day you’ll march down the Orange Blossom aisle that leads to a home of your own, it’s not too soon to begin to plan your hope chest and get a head start on your future. Then when the great day arrives, you’ll be ready with the essentials. And since you’ll have had plenty of time to collect them, they’ll be exactly what you want instead of last-minute pick-ups.¹¹²

The number one essential for immediate purchase was, of course, the hope chest itself, and the column suggested a particular brand (“Lane”) that could be found at a particular department store (“Gimbels”). Later “Treasure Chest” columns would advise using holiday and graduation money to buy the essentials of future marital entertaining: sterling silver, china, glassware, and dinnerware. The discourse of hope chests and the dream of future marital bliss runs counter to the discourse of the independent working woman from *Seventeen*’s first issues, which warned the reader to not put all her hopes in the expectation of a long-lasting marriage and homemaking as a career. But in five years time, transformation had taken place in the culture and at *Seventeen*. Society-wide, young women were being encouraged to marry (up) and

settle down into lives as mothers and consumers. Girls were given a new “study” mandate– politics and cerebral topics were out, homemaking and domestic topics were in. The advice of the July 1950 “Your Treasure Chest” – in both content and attitude – seems to portend the direction of the future, in stark contrast to the past:

Talk about a hope chest and the first things you think of are satin and lace, linen and silver. But how about a few practical thoughts in another direction? You study French, math and chemistry out of books, why not homemaking? Granted, experience may be the best teacher, but it can be cushioned with a bit of insight into the realms of sewing, cooking and housekeeping. And before you balk at dull book larnin’ [sic], look again. All of these books are pretty-to-look-at, easy-to-read and will probably turn out to be your most constant reference companions.¹¹³

Having Fun

“Having Fun” remained a substantial part of *Seventeen’s* editorial discourse, in fact growing more important in the postwar period. In some ways, this section changed minimally across time. Apparently, at least in *Seventeen’s* perspective, the activities and pursuits that constituted “teen fun” were somewhat timeless. “Having Fun” continued to include features on hobbies and sports, as well as the entertainment industry and celebrities (one small change: jazz musicians were out, actors and actresses were in). In addition, the backbone of this section continued to be its monthly features of brain teasers, record and movie reviews and the monthly “how not to act” comic – now drawn by Annette Hagyard and penned by a string of *Seventeen’s* writers.¹¹⁴ In addition, new monthly features were added, including a crossword puzzle and a club column (“Next on the Agenda”), as well as “Teens in the News” and “Let’s Go Shopping,” original monthly features that *Seventeen* shifted

from other rubrics to “Having Fun.”

By moving “Let’s Go Shopping” from “What You Wear” to “Having Fun,” *Seventeen* expanded the shopping opportunities far beyond fashion. Unrestricted by apparel boundaries, the “Let’s Go Shopping” buyers were free to explore a broader variety of stores, shopping for items for every room of the house and for every member of the family. Indeed, buying gifts – a pursuit that *Seventeen* encouraged during the war period – became even more a part of the magazine’s construction of “Having Fun” during the postwar period, particularly around holiday time.

But an interesting thing happened on the way to the postwar store – *Seventeen* couldn’t seem to decide if shopping was fun or work. By moving “Let’s Go Shopping” to “Having Fun,” they certainly seemed to be signaling their opinion of shopping as an enjoyable leisure pursuit. Positioning other articles about shopping under this rubric lent further support to this conceptualization. However, “Shopping Takes More Than Money,” written by former fashion editor Betty Gulesian, read like a disciplinary tutorial, complete with specific scenario scripts (e.g., what to say to a pushy saleswoman) and a myriad of guidelines to follow at all stages of shopping, from preparation to perusal to purchase. During the war period, *Seventeen* used the “Having Fun” section to educate the readership about work that was fun. By the postwar period, however, articles about paid employment were almost non-existent under this rubric and, instead, the magazine was teaching shopping as fun work. Gulesian concluded her article by pointing out both aspects of the shopping enterprise:

We hope you have begun to see why shopping demands more of you than money-in-the-purse. You also need patience, self-discipline, taste, an intelligent standard of values, a sense of proportion, a sense of responsibility. [...] And, of course we needn't tell *you* that shopping can be a lot of fun!¹¹⁵

CONCLUSION

Seventeen's sixth birthday lacked the trappings and hoopla of years past. No special birthday cover announced the occasion, no birthday letter from Helen Valentine mused about "Baby's" growth – in fact, Helen Valentine had left the magazine she founded several months prior.¹¹⁶ *Seventeen* entered the 1950's with new leadership and a new attitude, amidst a whole new postwar world, in a "modern" America that now promoted a very different gender role paradigm for its women.

Much like sand through an hour glass, the discursive world of *Seventeen* shifted inversely in five years' time. War period *Seventeen* balanced the lighter fare of fashion, beauty, and fun with serious subject matter on service, citizenship, and intellectual growth. The magazine's early articles and features, as organized by their Table of Contents categories, constructed an ideal teen girl whose life/work focused on four different parameters: her body ("What You Wear" and "How You Feel and Look"), her world ("Getting Along in the World"); her mind ("Your Mind"); and her leisure ("Having Fun"). By concentrating on these four areas, *Seventeen* communicated to teen girls that these were *their* areas – areas that they could claim as their own, work-sites worthy of their attention and labor. The teen girl ideal, as constructed by the magazine during the first year, groomed and clothed her body, shopped responsibly, excelled in school, volunteered in her community, planned for

college, aspired to a “careerist” future, fought inequality, learned about “others,” expanded her mind – and had a little fun on the side.

Postwar *Seventeen*, on the other hand, metamorphosed into a magazine about fashion, fun, and home – sprinkled with a little bit of citizenship, intellectualism, and culture. In comparison to the magazine’s earlier representations, the teen girl’s world shrank, while the importance of her home (present and future) grew.

The turning point in *Seventeen*’s shifting and diminishing world view occurred after war’s end, when it added the new topical category of “Food and Home Doings.” In doing so, the magazine discursively constructed “home” as a new essential parameter of a young woman’s life, adding it to her body, mind, and world as an important feminine work-site. Cooking and decorating, which the magazine previously presented as “having fun” or just another activity in “getting along in the world,” became women’s domestic work – i.e., home work. Simultaneously, the addition of this section led to a subtraction in the prevalence of some of the existing parameters. Although the magazine’s focus on a teen girl’s body work (“What You Wear”) and leisure activities (“Having Fun”) remained strong and unchallenged by “Food and Home Doings,” its inclusion dramatically and negatively affected *Seventeen*’s attention to the parameters of her world (“Getting Along in the World”) and mind (“Your Mind”).

The postwar teen girl ideal, as constructed through the magazine’s discourse, followed the shift in the Table of Contents categories. The modern teen girl still needed to groom and properly clothe herself, do well in school and plan for college,

but the motivation for her “work” changed. As homemaking supplanted career as her future goal, boys (and men) became the measurers of her success. Thus, “Getting Along in the World” now meant getting along with boys, and “What You Wear” became a boy’s business. Interestingly and relatedly, the role of an ideal teen girl as a world citizen (and future leader) lessened, while her role as a consumer increased. The call to consumption, previously confined to body work, expanded to include home-work; modern Teena not only had to decorate her body, but also her house.

Ironically, following a trend in the magazine more generally, the features of “Food and Home Doings” section often referred to the wonders of modern life. This version (or vision) of modernity, however, was a far cry from the true progressiveness preached in “Your Mind” and “Getting Along in the World” of war period *Seventeen*. Thus, as the 1950's would prove retrospectively, progress does not always follow a linear vertical path. Indeed, in marching “ahead” into the 50's, Teena, *Seventeen's* teen girl ideal, left the world, entered the home, and lost her mind.

CHAPTER 7

Divorce in the Family: *Seventeen* Loses its Matriarch – and its Way

Seventeen's Fourth Birthday issue included a "family portrait" of its most important staffers. Entitled "The Editors Serenade You," the two-page illustration by artist Joe Kaufman depicted each of the editors as musicians performing on a stage, with Helen Valentine as the "major" conductor, and Alice Thompson as the "minor" conductor [See Figure 6, Appendix B]. The portrait and the descriptive poems that accompanied it were at once affectionate and humorous, but the most surprising and giggle-worthy detail of Kaufman's picture appeared upon close inspection. Holding back the curtains that surrounded the stage and its featured players were owner Walter Annenberg and general manager Kenneth Friede – in the guise of two smiling cupids!¹

Kaufman's painting presented the perfect picture of a harmonious workplace family. But the same family that appeared to make beautiful music together in their fourth birthday portrait experienced a very painful separation little more than a year later. Change had been slowly brewing for several years, as Walter Annenberg and Helen Valentine began to clash on editorial policy. Two issues, in particular, served to ultimately create an insurmountable divide between the two. The first came to the surface in 1946 when Annenberg dispatched general manager Ken Friede to deliver a mandate to Valentine: reduce the number of pictures of "negros" in the magazine. Two features in the November 1946 issue, one about an integrated Quaker work

camp, the other about a barn dance sponsored by Pepsi-Cola, brought this simmering tension to a head. Both articles included pictures of African American teenagers, which Annenberg found disturbing, at first asserting that he feared offending advertisers. Helen immediately sent a letter of reply, balking at his order, and reminding Annenberg of their common Jewish heritage and of the anti-Semitism that it could inspire. Speaking specifically about the feature on the Quaker camp, Valentine retorted: "Surely the presence of colored children in that story should delight any kindly human being. Anyone who is offended by it should not be holding a copy of SEVENTEEN."² Annenberg's rebuttal arrived by mail several days later. In it, he challenged Valentine's liberalism, lecturing her on his own version of democracy:

I happen to believe that ordinarily ethnic groups have significant contributions to make and should be preserved. I suspect you think it would be good for the world for negros to marry whites. I don't. That's not the democratic way. Democracy implies the right, nay, the duty, of minority groups, to make their contributions as living and ardent minorities.³

He went on to disparage Valentine's educational approach in the magazine, which he likened to "a nurse strap[ping] the child in a highchair and stuff[ing] the food down his throat." Annenberg, 15 years Valentine's junior, asserted his authority by concluding with the singular question, "Do I make myself clear," and signing the letter "Old Dad." Apparently, Valentine heard his message, loud and clear; pictures of black teens diminished in later issues, while pictures of black and white teens in interaction disappeared completely.

The other issue about which Annenberg and Valentine clashed was less

politically and socially charged, but still a point of importance to both. Valentine, who Annenberg originally accorded total editorial control, wrote and edited *Seventeen* for teen girls between the ages of 13 and 19. By 1948, however, Annenberg had become convinced that he could increase *Seventeen's* profits by expanding its target audience to include young women up to the age of 24 – women who, not coincidentally, had more money to spend. Annenberg demanded that Valentine add editorial and fashion content for this older constituency and once again, Valentine found herself losing the battle of control over the content of her own cultural creation.⁴

Other signs of discord began to emerge. In April 1949, *The New York Times* ran an announcement that Executive Editor Alice Thompson had been promoted to Publisher– a position above her former boss, Editor-in-Chief, Helen Valentine.⁵ Two weeks later, *Time* magazine printed a longer article about Thompson's promotion, explaining that:

Owner and part-time Publisher Walter Annenberg decided it was high time he had a full-time publisher to get promotion, advertising and editorial departments working together to plug the magazine.⁶

In retrospect, the promotion of Thompson over Valentine, and Annenberg's public explanation, represented minor rumblings that should have put the employees at *Seventeen* on the alert for a subsequent seismic event. Editorial assistant Ingrid Loewenstein remembers sensing a growing tension between Helen Valentine and Alice Thompson, but most staffers were just too busy taking care of the daily tasks of running a very successful magazine to notice. And wildly successful it was. In

recognition of its fifth birthday in 1949, *Newsweek* ran an article that lauded the genius of both Helen Valentine and her Baby:

[...] *Seventeen* boomed mainly because it knew, or correctly guessed, the real nature of the teen-aged girl. It assumed that, far from being a mere pigtailed autograph grabber, she was a bright and peppy kid full of beans – and full of hope. So it told her about fashions, food, beauty, recreation, art, personality development, and even, in straight words of one syllable, sex and economics. It advised her, confided in her, and listened to her, but it never talked down to her. Jive jargon was out, and modern art was in. Fiction and illustrations were among the best in the business.

Behind the whole idea was willowy, dynamic grandmother and ex-ad writer (ships, shaving soap, etc.) named Helen Valentine. As relentlessly enthusiastic as the girls who are her readers, Mrs. Valentine wears king-sized, silver-framed glasses, works in a lime-green office, and paints as a hobby. [...]

Partly, *Seventeen* mushroomed quickly because it appeared as one of the first likely showcases for teen-agers' goods – clothes and jewelry, for instance. But looking back last week on her strapping brain child's first five years, Helen Valentine liked something better than her magazine's prospering business. She was as pleased as a teen-ager with a sleek new dress that Teena – as *Seventeen* staffers like to call the prototype of their readers – turned out to be the kind of girl she had foreseen."⁷

That last paragraph held some of the clues to the changes to come. "Helen Valentine liked something better than her magazine's prospering business" it states. Indeed, she cared passionately about her staff and her millions of readers. Owner Walter Annenberg, however, approached the magazine as a business, and profit as the bottom line. This disjuncture between editorial and business goals became increasingly problematic. According to Estelle Ellis:

Into the fifth year, there were rumblings that were going on, the business side of the magazine was not happy with the progress that she [Valentine] was making... Who knows! [voice elevates] I don't know what their argument was because the magazine was so damn successful. But whatever it was, they were looking to have someone who was more amenable to whatever the

business side – the business interests of the magazine was all about, and Alice filled the bill. She was, um, *amenable* to whatever sweet words were being whispered in her ear.⁸

Unbeknownst to most of the staffers, Walter and Alice were on their way to becoming *Seventeen's* new power couple,⁹ and significant change at the magazine was only a matter of time. Even for someone as high up as Estelle, however, the events to come would still shock:

No, we were, you know, *we were not even aware of it*. [...] I mean we didn't think of it! I mean she [Alice] was part of what was making this magazine *go* and, you know, I was busy doing what I was doing. I was certainly *not* – I was *not* tuned into anything like this. I mean, I mean – we were all girl scouts here! We were, we were really beating tambourines, we were doing our job, we were – and who was thinking about anything like this. And suddenly..."¹⁰

And suddenly everything changed –and those changes were cataclysmic. On February 15, 1950, Helen Valentine sent a letter of resignation to Walter Annenberg that read:

Dear Walter:

Because you refused to speak to me on the telephone or see me when I came to Philadelphia, I feel that my direct approach to you must be through this letter. What I have to say is so important that I prefer not to reach you through Joe.

You sent me a message suggesting "a cooling off period" and then further discussion of the "details and terms of our future relations." I have used the former to think this through from every angle. The latter will not be necessary because I have decided not to renew my contract.

[...] As you must know this was a most difficult decision, not only because of the many good years of our association, but also because I know that few people are granted the happy privilege of seeing their idea so beautifully realized. For this I am and shall always be grateful.

Sincerely,
Helen Valentine¹¹

Reading between the lines, Valentine's resignation appears less than voluntary; certainly prodded – if not pushed. Annenberg refused to discuss the matter with her, either by phone or in person. Only Walter, Alice, and Helen had much knowledge about what was going on behind the scenes. But according to her friends, Valentine was ever the well-bred lady (this was, after all, a woman who wrote *A Guide to Charm*), one who frowned upon gossip, being loud, and making a fuss. Walter accepted Helen's civilized resignation, and much to the shock and utter incomprehension of most of the staff, Valentine announced her departure from the magazine she created and lovingly referred to as her “baby.”

On March 6, 1950, *Time* published an article reporting on the events of that day. Entitled “The Women” – an allusion to the 1939 film of the same name that portrayed women at war with each other – the article depicted Valentine very sympathetically and Alice Thompson much less so:

Since the birth of Triangle Publications' *Seventeen* five years ago, Helen Lachman Valentine, a lively, bright-eyed grandmother, has been its editor-in-chief. She liked to call it “my baby” and mothered not only the money-making teen-agers monthly (circ. 1,012,998) but the 50 girls and lone man¹² on its editorial staff. One afternoon last week, 56-year-old Editor Valentine called her brood into her neat chartreuse-and-green Manhattan office. “*Seventeen* has grown up,” said Mrs. Valentine with a catch in her voice. “It's a big girl now..” Like a mother who has watched her daughter growing away from her, “Mrs. V” was reluctantly ready to say goodbye. Silently, the staff filed by to shake her hand; several girls wept.

Reports of weeping staffers were not just media hyperbole. Former staffer Alberta remembers the day of Helen's resignation clearly:

All of us who were the editorial assistants in the various departments -- each department had at least one and some departments had more -- we were very

unsophisticated, very young so there was all this crying as though it had been a college dorm. Crying is the way I remember it. [...] Because Helen was leaving, because she was sort of the mother of us all.¹³

The article continued, describing the acrimonious fissure that had developed between Helen Valentine and Alice Thompson, the woman who, throughout their long history, had been both friend and nemesis:

Editor Valentine's dignified resignation capped a running disagreement with attractive, 39-year-old¹⁴ Publisher Alice Thompson, who was promoted from executive editor (over Mrs. V's head) only last spring (*Time*, May 16). Explained Mrs. Thompson: "Helen thinks that *Seventeen* is not only her baby—and, true, it was her idea – but also her property." The two old friends were taking the break-up hard; neither was speaking to the other.

Publisher Thompson announced that she herself would assume the title and duties of editor-in-chief. For the moment, she was also Lady High Everything Else; four members of Mrs. V's cabinet, including the managing editor, departed too.

The April, 1950 issue of *Seventeen* was Helen's final issue as editor-in-chief. Several months later, her name appeared as editor-in-chief on the masthead of *Charm*, another magazine that she would go on to transform for another constituency of American women – "women who work." Accompanying her in this new adventure were five *Seventeen* staffers: promotion director Estelle Ellis, art director Cipe Pineles, managing editor Andrée Vilas, fashion editor Carolyn Saks, and former fashion editor Eleanore Hillebrand.¹⁵

Staffers who remained at *Seventeen* grappled with the aftermath; Ingrid Loewenstein remembers that "[...] it came as a shock. I don't really recall whether, you know you always sense things, I guess, you know I never thought it would happen, she [Valentine] would not be there."¹⁶

Lowenstein's friend and fellow editorial assistant Alberta Eiseman reports similarly about the effects on herself and the other young staffers: "She [Helen Valentine] was extremely nice, you know very kind to the younger staff members so it was a big blow, it was a big blow for the magazine and everything."¹⁷

Ingrid Loewenstein remained at *Seventeen* through Alice Thompson's tenure and into that of Alice's successor, Enid Annenberg Haupt, Annenberg's sister, giving Ingrid the ability to examine and compare the magazine under its different editors. In contrasting the leadership styles of Helen and Alice, she explains:

I think Helen was more relaxed and more warm in person. Alice was very businesslike and you know she wasn't too interested in dealing with people like me who had no position at that time.¹⁸

Alice's "businesslike" leadership style, however, would be the wave of the future at the magazine, one which Enid Haupt, would also take. Ingrid further observes:

You know they [Alice Thompson and Enid Haupt] were running a magazine, Helen was more hands on and more sensitive to young people, I think, and she really felt caringly about the magazine and about young girls, you know she wanted to be of service to them. The others, I think, were just eager to have a good job and a career. This is, you know, after years of hindsight I suppose, too.¹⁹

Ingrid also reports that, over time, the professional business model slowly altered the magazine's editorial focus:

I think it was a little less casual than what I had felt before. More things that were revolving around advertising and, you know, it was getting to be less about – how can I put it – I mean we all felt that we were doing a service, that it was a service magazine and we were really giving information to kids that they valued and were important to them, but I think after a time, and it wasn't necessarily right after Helen left, but through the years the emphasis became

much more on the commercial side. Advertising was really the important section of the magazine rather than the service end.²⁰

For Estelle Ellis, the story of Helen Valentine and her Baby, while bittersweet in many ways, is ultimately a tragedy, particularly in regard to Alice Thompson's role in it all:

Alice – that's a tragic story ... cuz ... Alice was one of Helen's good friends. Walter Annenberg was *besotted* with her [Alice] and she ... [sigh] was very happy to take over. I mean, we don't have to go beyond there. I feel as if it was very tragic, but, you know, if you have any kind of realistic understanding of what happens in the world of business, she [Helen] was being displaced. But the terrible part was that he [Walter]... picked her [Alice] as the successor and that she was in a sense buying into it. Whereas the three of us [Helen, Estelle, Cipe] pulled out.²¹

Discursive ideals do not always mesh with personal and material realities, and that was certainly the case at *Seventeen*, generally, and for Alice Thompson, specifically. This is perfectly illuminated in Alice's own words to the boy and girl readers of the 1945 "Girl Meets Boy" issues, to whom she assured:

Today a woman in business need seldom fear another woman. We've learned in a few decades of being allowed to work, how to help each other. There are still a few of the early business women pioneers who are pitiless and jealous of their bitterly-earned positions. But very few. And there's no more devoted fraternity than a group of women working together on a job they like.²²

EXPLAINING *SEVENTEEN'S* METAMORPHIS

During *Seventeen's* first year, editor-in-chief Helen Valentine's vision of a balanced fashion and service magazine, speaking to teen girls as whole human beings, materialized in its editorial pages, in articles about art and science, government and politics, geography and social studies, education and employment, and service to one's community, nation, and world. The magazine's essayists wrote

passionately about issues such as racial and ethnic equality, religious freedom and tolerance, and gender equity. They counseled *Seventeen's* young readers to love their neighbors (near and far); to build friendships with boys as "fellow" citizens; to respect, but not necessarily imitate, their parents; and to consider a careerist future. This citizenship discourse served as a balance to the magazine's consumer discourse of fashion and beauty. In fact, from *Seventeen's* birth to first birthday, editor Valentine devoted more space to the serious issues of "Getting Along in Your World" and "Your Mind" than to "What You Wear" and "How You Look and Feel."

But events between the magazine's first and sixth birthdays worked to shift the magazine's discursive balance. In the intervening years, the consumer-friendly content of "What You Wear" and "Food and Home" increased, while the citizenship-focused content of "Getting Along in the World" and "Your Mind" declined. [See Table 4, Appendix C]. *Seventeen's* discourse moved away from Valentine's original feminist/progressive model of service and citizenship and toward the more familiar traditional/feminine model of fashion, romance and homemaking. Articles touting boy-girl parties replaced articles on political parties. Perhaps even more shocking, Walter Annenberg forced Helen Valentine out of her position as *Seventeen's* editor-in-chief, essentially severing the relationship between conceptual mother and child. How and why did this all happen in just six years time?

These changes can be explained, at least in part, by examining the forces that exerted pressure on Valentine and *Seventeen* almost from the beginning. They include: the cultural milieu of America, particularly as it transitioned from war to

postwar period; the economic structure of the magazine industry; the preferences and desires of the readership; and power relations at the magazine itself.

As the Culture Goes, So Goes the Cultural Product

Of these four forces, the socio-cultural changes that took place as America moved from war to postwar period provide the most easily identifiable explanation for changes in *Seventeen's* content between 1944 and 1950. In fact, this effect becomes even more visible if we view the magazine and its social environment within a broader historical context. From that vantage point, the America of World War II appears as a somewhat anomalous period. WWII (as with other war periods) created opportunities that made, for its duration, gender and racial boundaries more permeable, certainly in regard to occupational opportunities.²³ Perhaps American women felt this most profoundly, as the government and the advertising and media industries specifically targeted them as potential war workers, inundating them with patriotic pleadings to labor in support of the war effort. American women's magazines, *Seventeen* among them, were pressed into service to advance this cause. As a result, women's magazines of the war period rather uniformly sung the praises of women in the workforce, creating a harmonious "pro-work" chorus.²⁴

However, it is very important to note that *Seventeen's* early careerist discourse was neither driven nor limited by the social needs of the day, but by editor Helen Valentine's passionate belief – embodied in her own experience – that women could work at the jobs of their dreams *and* raise a family at the same time. Thus, instead of touting government sanctioned jobs such as nursing and war factory work, Valentine

and company encouraged *Seventeen's* early readers to consider careers in their chosen fields of media production, advertising, and promotions, but also in male-dominated fields such as medicine, law, and science. Within the pro-working women environment of the war, *Seventeen's* careerist messages meshed somewhat congruously with the culture.

War's end, however, brought a seismic shift in the social messages about women's roles as productive American citizens. As briefly detailed in Chapter 6, government and advertising once again joined forces to effect change in the American economy, this time asking women to exit their jobs, in order to make way for returning male soldiers.²⁵ The patriotic feminine ideal changed dramatically, from poster-girl working-woman Rosie the Riveter to televised homemakers such as June Cleaver.²⁶ Media, in particular, were now (showing and) telling women that their work was in the home – as beautiful companions, homemakers, mothers, and consumers.²⁷

Naomi Wolf theorizes that the beauty myth, in particular, “flourishes when material constraints on women are dangerously loosened,” as a kind of backlash corrective.²⁸ World War II presented just such a “loose” environment, and Betty Friedan was among the first to identify the mediated backlash that quickly followed war's end. She pinpoints the early postwar period as the petri dish in which grew the “feminine mystique” – the amorphous but powerful consumer/ homemaker/ sex-object model represented in the pages of postwar women's magazines and internalized by many American women.²⁹ Friedan contends that although many

American men and women exited the war period with a longing for stability and the shelter of home, advertisers (with the tacit blessing of the government) exploited this idealized image of home and homemaking by playing on men's and women's insecurities in order to sell products. Certainly, these kinds of images, and the discourse supporting them, became more common in both the editorial and advertising pages of postwar *Seventeen*.

Advertisers Make the (Magazine) World Go Around

While the cultural transformation in postwar America, driven in part by the efforts of government and advertising, offers the most obvious explanation for the shift in the magazine's editorial content, other forces exerted pressure on *Seventeen's* delicate discursive balance from its very inception. Chief among these was the economic structure of the magazine publishing industry, whose financial house is built upon the foundation of advertising revenue.³⁰ Simply put, mainstream magazines cannot subsist without the economic support of advertisers.³¹ As a result of this unequal financial relationship between cultural producer and financier, advertisers often wield a significant amount of power over the editorial content of a magazine, preferring and encouraging a consumer-friendly environment for their ads.³² At *Seventeen*, this advertiser effect was visible from the beginning in the construction of the promotional campaign Teena – especially when contrasted with the magazine's original editorial teenage girl ideal.

Helen Valentine knew firsthand the vital importance of selling her infant magazine and its readership to advertisers and business, having herself held the

position of promotional director at *Mademoiselle*, another magazine that faced a similar challenge of selling itself and a previously unidentified market group (college-age women) to the business world. Valentine knew that no matter how successful *Seventeen* could or would become with a devoted teen-age readership, its economic success and viability was predicated upon its acceptance and adoption by adult businesspeople (mostly men). Thus, promotion director Estelle Ellis's predominant task – perhaps the most important task at the fledgling magazine – was to craft a campaign that would sell teen girls as a consumer market niche to business. To do this she created “Teena, the prototypical teen-age girl” and introduced her to manufacturers and advertisers as the embodiment/representative of *Seventeen's* (idealized) readership. Although Ellis imbued Teena with many of the characteristics and virtues espoused in the magazine's editorial pages, Teena's main selling points were three-fold: 1) her financial ability to shop and buy, 2) her vulnerability and openness to buying suggestions and incentives (as a “blank slate,” yet to be “branded”), and 3) her dialectical copycat/leadership consumer roles. Ellis highlighted these specific dimensions out of economic necessity; the Teena that “went to market” was the kind of consumer that advertisers and business people were in the market for. Thus, to a considerable extent, the market joined the magazine in constructing the promotional Teena ideal.

The economic mandate to attract and hold advertisers also explains, at least in part, why the editorial Teena ideal became more like the promotion Teena over time and, similarly, why the editorial content, originally balanced between citizenship and

consumption, shifted heavily toward more consumer-friendly material. Although the magazine's promotion campaign was ostensibly intended to educate advertisers about *Seventeen* and its readership, the advertisers turned the tables, becoming primary educators within the magazine. Indeed, successful advertisers never just sell products – they create and visually communicate an idealized lifestyle that goes far beyond soap or soup or sanitary napkins.³³ In their storyteller capacity, *Seventeen's* advertisers joined the editorial staff in contributing to the overall discourse of the magazine and in constructing the teen girl ideal. Body Wear advertisers visually modeled the teen body ideal, while Body Care advertisers advised on how to achieve it. In the postwar years, Domestic advertisers added their voices (and products) to the mix, singing the praises of the happy homemaker ideal. Together, these advertisers created an overarching narrative about a woman's ideal life trajectory in which beauty led to romance led to marriage led to homemaking. This was a far cry from Helen Valentine's original editorial vision, the magazine's early discourse, and the lives of *Seventeen's* working women creators themselves, but it was much less incongruous with the magazine's content in 1950. Interestingly, the war may also have had an effect in this arena, too. Cynthia White studied British women's magazines across two centuries and found that their editors had more influence over the content of their magazines during World War II than at any other time, in part because of less pressure from advertisers to support their interests.³⁴

Readers Have Their Say

The government and advertisers, however, were not the only cultural forces

pushing *Seventeen* away from its original progressive/feminist roots and toward the more traditional patriarchal/capitalist model. *Seventeen*'s readers also voiced their opinion on the magazine's content, through their often impassioned letters to the editor³⁵ as well as through *Seventeen*'s two commissioned market surveys, published as *Life with Teena I* and *II*.³⁶ Young letter-writers, products of the same cultural milieu that shaped *Seventeen*, often pleaded for more articles on beauty related topics, such as makeovers and modeling. These anecdotal indicators were backed up by the generalizable survey results, which indicated that a majority of *Seventeen*'s target readership preferred reading about fashion, beauty, and homemaking, and less so about careers and citizenship.³⁷ A vast majority of the teen girl respondents also revealed that they enjoyed learning about and practicing the arts of domesticity. They reported that they participated in these kinds of endeavors in the present, taking cooking classes at school and giving parties at home, but perhaps more importantly, they aspired to a life of domesticity in the future.³⁸ Indeed, a majority of girls in both surveys responded that they did not want to work after marriage, preferring instead to "keep house."³⁹ Interestingly, this finding was more pronounced in older versus younger respondents, perhaps indicating that as young women aged, they underwent a social education that challenged certain occupational aspirations in support of domestic expectations. Certainly, it suggests that adolescents' dreams for their futures are adaptable and that a feminine desire for domesticity is not necessarily "natural."

Perhaps to have expected a different response from the majority of readers

would have been naive and unrealistic. As feminist scholars working in a range of paradigms note, an important component in the maintenance of gender inequality is women's complicity in their own subordination.⁴⁰ One way this happens is through women's internalization of powerful cultural fairy tale narratives, such as the beauty myth⁴¹ or the happy homemaker ideal.⁴² Once internalized, subordination appears natural and normal (indeed, good), and women see no motivation for change. In this case, *Seventeen's* wartime gender-role paradigm may have meshed with the cultural prescription of that brief period (and certainly with the ideology of its own working women producers), but it represented a counter-cultural minority opinion, particularly when contrasted with the prevailing traditional family ideal, imprinted on the psyches of men and women alike. Thus, although early *Seventeen* preached a vision of a new gender-role ideal, the majority of its parishioners were evidently tuning them out, choosing, instead, to aspire to the more familiar culturally prescribed ideal of a woman's role as a beautiful homemaker.

One can only imagine the dilemma – both ideological and practical – that this disconnect between editorial vision and reader aspiration created for Helen Valentine, who had spent her entire adult life working *and* raising a family, and who had steadfastly promoted the careerist model in her magazine. The 1949 promotional document, “The Dummy That Made Sense,” offers some insight into her mind on this matter. Billed as “An Editor Thinks on Paper” and written in Helen Valentine's hand, the “Dummy” presented a prototype of a *Seventeen* magazine issue. Words in black pencil represented Valentine's vision for the magazine in 1944; words in red pencil

represented her thoughts on the magazine's reality in 1949 (its fifth birthday). Under the heading "Career Department," Valentine "envisioned" (in black pencil) a magazine in which it was "Our job to discuss" a balanced agenda of options, including:

Job horizons for women

Work – a stop-gap before marriage?

Job training

Preparation for marriage

Marriage as a career

Marriage *plus* a career –

pros and cons

Her red pencil words of 1949, however, testified to the dominant reader sentiment on this issue, lamenting: "Poor pros didn't stand a chance! Our surveys proved Teena wants to be a full-time homemaker."

Money is Power

The final explanation for the transformations at *Seventeen* between birth and sixth birthday relates to the power structure at the magazine itself. Of the four forces set out in this conclusion, this would be the least obvious to the outside observer, but arguably the most significant and influential factor in the events that transpired. For in the end, the final death blow to Helen Valentine's position as *Seventeen's* editor-in-chief and to her unique vision for the magazine was dealt, not by changes in the culture nor by pressures from advertisers and readers, but by her business partner and

Baby's co-creator, *Seventeen's* owner, Walter Annenberg.

This story – the story of the birth of *Seventeen*, the teen magazine genre, and the teenage girl ideal – begins with an idea in the mind of Helen Valentine. Although it was Walter Annenberg who first approached Valentine with an offer to edit one of his magazines, he envisioned a women's fashion magazine – a genre that already existed and had been proven economically successful. Valentine, however, countered with her own novel idea. She wanted to create and edit a fashion and service magazine directed to teen-age girls – a totally new literary creation. Ironically (in view of future events), Walter Annenberg himself documented Valentine's important role in the origins of *Seventeen*, in his letter of October 2, 1944, detailed in Chapter 3. At that time, Annenberg established Valentine as *Seventeen's* creator, responsible for the magazine's concept and name.⁴³

In addition, Annenberg's letter also stated that Valentine had been assured that she would be allowed to edit *Seventeen* "with an absolutely free hand." While true for her first few years at the magazine, this did not last, as Annenberg began to exert more pressure on the magazine's direction, first nudging and then shackling Valentine's "free hand." Over time, Annenberg and Valentine grew more and more at odds over the magazine's ideology and direction, creating a divide that eventually culminated in Valentine's forced exit as editor, separating her from her own cultural creation.

While almost invisible at the time, the tiny seeds of Valentine's future loss were planted the day that she entered Annenberg's employ. While clashes of

personality and ideology between the two provided the fertilizer that allowed the seeds to germinate and grow, the complex explanation for what happened at *Seventeen* includes the structural relations of the workplace.

More than a century before *Seventeen* was but a twinkle in Helen Valentine's eye, philosopher Karl Marx noted that the pursuit of profit necessitates the exploitation of laborers by owners, and that although a contract made between owner and laborer may appear both "fair" and freely-given, it most certainly *is not*. As Marx describes:

In the market he (the labourer) stood as owner of the commodity 'labour-power' face to face with other owners of commodities, dealer against dealer. The contract by which he sold to the capitalist his labour-power proved, so to say, in black and white that he disposed of himself freely. The bargain concluded, it is discovered that he was no 'free agent.'⁴⁴

Viewing the events and relationships at *Seventeen* through Marx's frame helps to reveal an economic power differential that might be otherwise obscured. Helen Valentine made a contract with Walter Annenberg that seemed to set out their relations as an *apparent* partnership. However, the day that Valentine entered Annenberg's employ, she ceded ownership of her own cultural creation (the magazine as a concept) to him. In effect, she sold not just her labor to Annenberg, but her idea, too. Years later, Estelle Ellis described her own frustration in watching Valentine lose ownership of her intellectual property, not just at *Seventeen*, but also at *Charm*, the magazine she edited and re-created as a magazine for working women during the 1950's:

[...] *twice* in Helen's career lifetime she had created two incredible documents,

historical documents, about women, and the importance of women, and the changes in women, and the significance of teenagers and then working women. She had translated them into two successful magazines and if she had done that, if she had developed it, like a zipper or a safety pin, she would have been credited with her legacy, but because it was a magazine, and because these were times where women didn't behave the way Martha Stewart did to go buy back her title from Time/Life, women didn't know that they had that kind of power. She just ... allowed it to happen. And so nobody other than the publisher benefited from the creation of these two historical publication documents.⁴⁵

Ellis's explanation for these two tragedies in Helen Valentine's life points out a significant inadequacy of Marx's original model, which revealed class oppression while obscuring that of gender. Feminist sociologist Heidi Hartmann improved the Marxist "capitalism" model by expanding it to include patriarchy. According to Hartmann's dual systems model, capitalism creates the hierarchical structure, but patriarchy controls who fills the positions within that structure.⁴⁶ Simply put, in a capitalist patriarchy, men generally end up with the most prestigious, highest paying jobs while women generally are left with the less prestigious, lower paying jobs – including that of domestic labor.

Once revealed, it's easy to see how patriarchy benefited Walter Annenberg, especially in relation to the women in his life. Of significant importance to this story, Walter Annenberg owned *Seventeen* because his father chose to bequeath the majority of the family's estate, including total control of Triangle publishing, to his only son. This move essentially made Walter the patriarch of his family of origin, leaving his seven sisters and even his mother at his financial mercy. As a businessman, he operated in a separate-sphere world, in which his wife took care of

the home life so that he could devote the entirety of his attentions to his work life. On the other hand, many of his women employees at *Seventeen*, including editor Helen Valentine, promotions director Estelle Ellis, and assistant editor (and later editor-in-chief) Alice Thompson split their labors between work and home. Finally, as the owner of *Seventeen*, he had the power to hire and fire editors as he liked.

This unequal business relationship between women editors and men owners was/is in no way unique to *Seventeen*, but instead stands as the capitalist patriarchy model for all profit-driven magazines. Thus, one lesson to be learned from this example is that while a magazine's editor-in-chief appears to wield substantial power in a magazine workplace, that power is purely superficial. In reality, the editor is completely vulnerable to the whims of the owner. Alice Thompson, Annenberg's hand-picked replacement for Helen Valentine, learned this lesson herself. Thompson, who had worked her way to the top in a very familiar gendered way (by ingratiating herself with her male boss), eventually found herself on the wrong end of Annenberg's good graces. Annenberg's biographer, Christopher Ogden, explained the turn in relations from Annenberg's perspective, elucidating the power inequality in the male owner/female editor relationship: "Walter and Thompson got along well [...] until the editor one day made the same mistake as her predecessor [Valentine] and forgot who was actually in charge."⁴⁷

Annenberg replaced Thompson with his sister, Enid Annenberg Haupt. Years later, in a *New York Times* interview, Haupt described the events that led up to Thompson's dismissal from *Seventeen* and her own hire. Haupt's version illustrates

yet another layer of inequality in the hierarchy of relations – between staff and owner, and editor and reader – that of social class:

Walter foisted the editorship on me when he was terminating a lady [Thompson] who had become a great nuisance. I knew nothing about running a magazine, but my brother said, “You can bring culture to the average working person who has not had your advantages.”⁴⁸

Apparently, at least for Walter Annenberg, a socially “advantaged” editor without experience but with a clear understanding of “who was actually in charge” was a superior choice over an editor with experience, but without said understanding.

In this case, nepotism established a marriage made in heaven (albeit somewhat incestuous), and Haupt served as *Seventeen*’s publisher, editor and editor-in-chief until 1970. Together, Haupt and Annenberg controlled both the business and editorial sides of *Seventeen* – as well as its institutional history.

Annenberg’s Legacy: (Money is) Power is Knowledge

Walter Annenberg’s Triangle Publications owned and published *Seventeen* until 1989, when it sold the magazine to Murdoch Magazines.⁴⁹ Annenberg died at the age of 94 in 2002, having been named in that year’s *Fortune* magazine as the 39th wealthiest American, with an estimated net worth of \$4 billion. Obituaries lauded him for his contributions to charities, including the endowment of two prestigious journalism schools, the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California and the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. They remembered his appointment as U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain by his good friend President Richard Nixon, and his foresightful “founding” of

Seventeen magazine and *TV Guide*. The Associated Press obituary for Annenberg, published in major newspapers across the country, including *USA Today*, reported that “[Annenberg] founded *Seventeen*, the fashion and beauty monthly for teenage girls, in 1944. It was edited by his sister, Enid Haupt.”⁵⁰

While not explicitly stated, this account infers that Enid Haupt served as *Seventeen*’s first editor. Annenberg’s obituary in *The Independent*, a London newspaper, made this leap even more overtly, stating that Annenberg “launch[ed] *Seventeen*, a fashion and life-style monthly for teenage girls, which his sister Enid Haupt edited.”⁵¹ Even the venerable *New York Times* didn’t get the story straight. Its obituary, while mentioning Helen Valentine as Annenberg’s “collaborator” at *Seventeen*, attributed the idea for the magazine to Walter’s inspiration “after he had noticed the prevalence of teenage fashion in shop windows on Fifth Avenue and realized that there was no magazine aimed at this lucrative market.”⁵²

For those people either present in the early days of *Seventeen*’s creation or familiar with the documentation (media accounts and correspondence) from the time of its origins, Annenberg’s obituaries 58 years later beg an important and disturbing question: Why did Annenberg’s role in the public narrative of the magazine’s history grow more important over time, while Helen Valentine’s role so drastically diminished, sometimes to the point of oblivion? The answer to this question also lies in power, particularly in power as a privileged position for storytelling.

Frederick Nietzsche (and later Michel Foucault) famously turned the adage, “knowledge is power,” on its head, noting instead that “power is knowledge.”⁵³ Very

often, people in privileged positions of power get to tell the stories of history, their versions bound into books and magazines and newspapers and the public consciousness, becoming “knowledge” or “the truth” or just “the way it was.” Lost in their tellings, however, are the “truths” or lives or actions of the people without power – usually women, people of color, the poor and working class, the illiterate, and the disadvantaged. Although Helen Valentine maintained a semblance of power in her six years as *Seventeen’s* editor-in-chief, her exit led to a complete loss of control over her own cultural creation, not just as a business and magazine, but as a historical narrative. Indeed, from that point on, Walter Annenberg didn’t just control the magazine as a business; he also controlled much of the discourse about the magazine’s institutional history. Estelle Ellis contends that Annenberg began rewriting *Seventeen’s* history when his sister Enid entered the picture:

You have to understand that one of the things that happened was Helen Valentine’s name was off the radar. And the reason for it – that when Walter got tired of Alice Thompson, he put his sister in charge, and from that point on, he wanted the memory of where this began *erased*. And he wanted the memory of it to begin with Enid Haupt.⁵⁴

While Ellis attributes a conscious motivation on Annenberg’s part, this would be almost impossible to ascertain, certainly from the standpoint of a historical observer. What can be documented, however, is the trajectory that the narrative traveled in the public domain, as it morphed through time, beginning as one story and ending as another.

The retelling of *Seventeen’s* origins happened on at least three fronts: in the magazine itself, in media reports about *Seventeen* and Walter Annenberg, and in

Walter Annenberg's biographies.⁵⁵ The cleansing of Helen Valentine from the narrative of *Seventeen*'s origins began almost immediately in the magazine, through the omission of any references to her founding role in the magazine's anniversary issues. For instance, the 10th anniversary "Happy Birthday" essay in the September 1954 issue noted the magazine's "birth," but without mention of Valentine. Then, departing altogether from the celebratory tradition established by Valentine, *Seventeen* completely ignored its 20th and 25th birthdays.

In September 1974, *Seventeen* returned to the tradition of birthday recognition, noting its 30th birthday— but again, without any mention of Helen Valentine. A decade later, the magazine's 40th anniversary issue included a birthday message from Walter Annenberg, in which he reflected back on the magazine's origins. Although he quoted from Valentine's original "credo" letter to the reader, he spoke of it using the editorial "we" (as in "'We are interested in the kind of human being you are,' *we* said in that inaugural issue."), not citing the essay's actual author. In fact, just once in the 50 years after Valentine left *Seventeen* did the magazine make reference to its creator, and only after it was no longer owned by Triangle Publications. Carolyn Miller, the magazine's editor-in-chief in 1994, made the anomalous reference, writing in the 50th anniversary issue that "Helen Valentine, *Seventeen*'s founding editor-in-chief, [...] was ahead of her time." Perhaps not coincidentally, Miller was an acquaintance of Estelle Ellis, and very possibly knew of Valentine's role in the magazine's origins. Unfortunately, her attempt to bring Valentine back into the narrative appears to have been a case of too little, too late. In

October 2004, *Seventeen* – under the editorship of Atoosa Rubenstein – published a 60th Anniversary Collector's Edition that once again lacked any mention of Helen Valentine.

Valentine's omission from *Seventeen*'s institutional history did not just occur in the magazine, but in the public discourse about the magazine. In fact, while media reports during Valentine's tenure at *Seventeen* documented her role as the magazine's creator, articles following her exit often completely ignored her role. In many of these instances, Valentine and others tried to correct the inaccurate media accounts. For example, in 1967, *Women's Wear Daily's* "Inside Fashion" column quoted Nancy White, then editor-in-chief of *Harper's Bazaar*, as saying "Enid Haupt started her own magazine [referring to *Seventeen*]." ⁵⁶ Helen Valentine immediately fired off a response, asking for a correction. White wrote back, saying "Helen dear: Of course I know you started *Seventeen* ... I am so sorry – I will try and reach Eugenia [the columnist] but I don't know how she feels about retractions." ⁵⁷ Valentine also contacted Walter Annenberg, who still owned *Seventeen*, asking for his support in correcting the account. Annenberg, simultaneously dismissive of Valentine's personal concerns and of women in general, replied:

I note the photostat you sent me from *Women's Wear Daily*, embodying the quote of Nancy White's in relation to my sister.

Mrs. White's ignorance of the facts, of course, has nothing to do with the unpredictability of women in general, and, therefore, I think it would diplomatic for us to view this with some sympathy and understanding. [...]

Pouring salt in an already painful wound, Annenberg ended that letter with the

condescending chastisement: “Helen, let us continue not to take ourselves seriously.”

Easy for him to say – he wasn’t the person being written out of history. In fact, his public stature as *Seventeen*’s creator only increased with the passage of time.

In June 1970, *Fortune* magazine did a long feature article on Annenberg’s appointment as the U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain.⁵⁸ The article, written by journalist A. James Reichley, detailed Annenberg’s myriad business accomplishments, represented *Seventeen* as Annenberg’s conceptual creation, and Enid Haupt as its most influential editor. This time, *Fortune* magazine reader, William Rosen, *Seventeen*’s first advertising director, leapt to Helen’s defense, writing a letter of correction to *Fortune*’s managing editor, Louis Banks, with a copy to Valentine.⁵⁹ In his letter, Rosen set out the origins of *Seventeen* in no uncertain terms:

[...] Mr Reichley infers that the idea for *Seventeen* was Mr. Annenberg’s. Actually, this is not entirely true and I believe that the person who conceived and edited *Seventeen* for the first six years of its existence should be given full credit for having had the vision to recognize the potential of the teenage girl market at a time when none of the readership surveys even measured teenage readers.

In 1944, I was Advertising Director of the Annenberg magazines which included several movie magazines. Mr. Annenberg suggested to me that it might be a good plan to have a Hollywood fashion section in the movie publications in an effort to secure some of the fashion advertising which could not find space in the overloaded fashion magazines during the period of paper shortages.

In interviewing possible editors for the fashion section, Mr. Annenberg met with Mrs. Helen Valentine who was, at that time, Merchandising Director of *Mademoiselle* Magazine. It was she who sold him on the need for a teenage girl’s magazine and *Stardom* was immediately converted to *Seventeen*. The publication was an instantaneous success under Mrs. Valentine’s direction and

in a short time, it became a teenage girl's bible.

Mrs. Valentine left in 1950, as I did, and up until that time Mrs. Enid Haupt played absolutely no role in *Seventeen's* growth.

Cultural studies theorist Stuart Hall conceptualizes popular culture as a battlefield, a site where different forces – of varying strength and influence – struggle for dominance.⁶⁰ In this case, the discursive volley over *Seventeen's* institutional narrative offers a real-world illustration of this process at work. Because Annenberg wielded control over the magazine after Valentine left, and certainly because his social/political/economic position made him a dominant public figure with considerable media coverage, his version of *Seventeen's* origins became the predominant narrative over time. Valentine and others, however, at least in the beginning, attempted to challenge the dominant version with narratives that reflected their different realities.

Today, most of the people who were there at the beginning are gone; Valentine, for instance, died in 1986. Estelle Ellis, one of the few surviving staffers, continues to promote Valentine's prominent role in *Seventeen's* origins to anyone who will listen. Unfortunately, one singular voice cannot shout over the cacophony of a dominant discourse. After a while, a dominant discourse takes on a life of its own, begins to propagate itself, gets written down as history and embedded in the culture. Thus, it is not surprising that in 1993, a *New York Times* article about teen magazines reported that "[m]agazines for teen-age girls, of course, are nothing new. *Seventeen* was started by Walter Annenberg in 1944 and edited by Enid Haupt."⁶¹

Even Helen Valentine eventually seemed to tire of fighting the system and reliving the injustices of the past. In an interview that she gave in 1982 for the American Jewish Committee Oral History, the interviewer asked her why she left *Seventeen*. Helen answered: "Well, that's a long and complicated story and really not necessary to tell."⁶²

But that "long and complicated story" *was* and *is* necessary to tell. Because it allows us entry into the world of magazine-making, revealing the reality beyond the fantasy. Without this look, we have no vantage point beyond that given us by the magazine makers' themselves. Joy Leman describes the disconnect between idealized magazine image and magazine business reality, and the problem of blindly accepting the former without recognizing the latter:

The image of the magazine is as the work of a group of friends – mainly women – bringing together their individual skills and pooling these in a co-operative venture as informal and friendly as if the paste-up had been done on someone's scrub-top kitchen table. This image has maintained the seamless garment of the ideology of women's magazine – with no production processes, ownership battles and takeovers, sackings of personnel, advertising pressures, self-censorship by journalists, political attitudes, government advice, etc.... only the voice of "one of those friends we specially value, the ones who are always the same and always different."⁶³

Thus, the story of *Seventeen's* origins helps us understand the magazine as a cultural product, to view it within a socio-historical context, as the material result of the labor of real-life cultural producers working in a hierarchy, and the battleground for competing entities and discourses. It fleshes out and gives human form to the inequalities of gender, race, and social class that underlay (often in a very obscured way) the structure and relations of the magazine industry. It also helps explain how a

strong, smart, savvy woman armed with a great idea and equally admirable ideals can be rather easily overcome by myriad forces far beyond her control. And how a single magazine created to educate girls as “whole human beings” and responsible global and community citizens, could have become a magazine genre that primes girls to feel discontented about their bodies and their lives – and therefore eager consumers of the promises of advertising.

For all that, and perhaps most especially, to return Helen Valentine to her rightful place in *Seventeen*’s institutional history – that’s why it’s an important story to tell.

APPENDIX A

Research Method

My dissertation uses an extended case study design to illuminate the origins of *Seventeen*, the first teen magazine, focusing on its early years, from its birth in September 1944 until its sixth birthday in September 1950. I chose this specific periodization based on several interrelated reasons, including the fact that it utilizes the magazine's own milestone commemorative dates ("birthdays") as demarcation; it encompasses the tenure of first editor-in-chief Helen Valentine, as well as the aftermath of her dismissal; relevant and accessible archival documents are available for these years at *Seventeen*; and it spans a relatively short but incredibly significant historical period which straddles both war and postwar periods.

Consciously striving to understand and portray a holistic picture of culture-making, I investigated *Seventeen* as a text while always trying to place it in relation to its time period, its cultural milieu, its creators, and its readership. In order to do this, I implemented a multi-method strategy that included historical research (using both primary and secondary sources), open-ended interviews with eyewitnesses, and a combined quantitative and qualitative textual analysis of the magazine issues themselves. A detailed listing of all my sources, including academic monographs, non-scholarly books, magazines and newspaper articles, interviews, oral histories, and personal and archival documents, can be found in the Works Cited list.

My study provides the kind of in-depth look into the culture-making process that is rare, in part because cultural producers often zealously guard the privacy of

their inner sanctum. However, due to the willingness of Estelle Ellis, the family of Helen Valentine, and several former staffers to share their memories and their personal collections with me, I have had the invaluable opportunity to explore *Seventeen* not just as a text, but as a business in its infancy and the product of some very extraordinary women's labor.

Chapter 2: The Birth of the Teen Magazine

I approached Chapter 2 with two primary goals in mind: to illustrate the emergence of *Seventeen* in light of its broader social/historical/cultural context, and to connect *Seventeen* as a text to its creators and their workplace. In order to represent the cultural milieu of the early 1940's, I drew on relevant historical documents (primary sources), including newspapers, magazines, and industry publications such as *The Writer's Market*. I also drew on secondary sources, such as academic monographs and non-scholarly books about the war period, the magazine industry, and the evolving cultural conceptualizations of citizenship and consumption.

In order to reveal *Seventeen's* relationship to its creators, I began by investigating the backgrounds and personal lives of its primary progenitors, editor-in-chief Helen Valentine and owner/publisher Walter Annenberg. I included information on their childhoods and backgrounds because I believe that their personal experiences (and, dare I say, psychological factors), guided their goals and expectations for the magazine and its readership. In addition, their individual positions on what Patricia Hill Collins calls the "matrix of domination"¹ influenced the business of *Seventeen* and their relationship with each other.

Most of the information I gathered on Helen Valentine and Walter Annenberg came from Helen Valentine's oral history, my interviews with her daughter, Barbara Valentine Hertz, and granddaughter, Valentine Hertz Kass, and two biographies written about Walter Annenberg by John Cooney and Christopher Ogden, the latter biographer having been allowed extensive access to Annenberg and his papers. I also drew on correspondence between Annenberg and Valentine, made available to me by Valentine Hertz Kass. In addition, I included the perspective of *Seventeen's* first promotion director, Estelle Ellis, an eyewitness who knew and worked with both Valentine and Annenberg, drawing on her oral history and my numerous interviews and personal correspondences with her. In addition, because Alice Thompson played an important role in Helen Valentine's life and in her exit from *Seventeen*, I tried to gather as much information as I could about her, drawing on social security records, newspaper and magazine accounts of her career, and interviews with work colleagues. Finally, I conducted several telephone interviews with two *Seventeen* editorial assistants, Alberta Eiseman and Ingrid Loewenstein Sladkus.

Chapter 3: *Seventeen* at War; Chapter 6: *Seventeen* at Peace

Chapters 3 and 6 are parallel chapters that feature a combination quantitative/qualitative textual analysis to elucidate *Seventeen's* editorial discourse during two different 13-month periods representing the war and postwar periods. Chapter 3 covers the first thirteen issues from *Seventeen's* birth to first birthday (September 1944 to September 1945), while Chapter 6 covers the thirteen issues from *Seventeen's* fifth to sixth birthday (September 1949 to September 1950). I chose to sample two

periods for the textual analysis because of the time-consuming nature of deeply reading every issue. The two 13-issue samples are meant to represent war and postwar periods, as well as the beginning and end of Helen Valentine's tenure as editor-in-chief.

To begin my textual analysis, I closely read every page of each sampled issue of *Seventeen*, including the front cover and all copy, editorial and advertising, words and pictures, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data through copious and detailed note-taking.² In doing so, I was engaged in the kind of memo-writing that Kathy Charmaz describes as an integral part of the grounded theory-building process.³

I coded every article and fiction story on two levels. First, I noted how *Seventeen* categorized them in the magazine's Table of Contents. Then, after a close reading, I identified overarching discursive themes as they emerged from the text. I labeled these as: Consuming (shopping, buying, products); Body (hygiene, health, grooming, clothes, appearance); School (high school, college); Work (paid employment, either now or later); Home (entertaining, decorating, domestic activities); Relationships (boys, family, friends); Citizenship (democracy, war/postwar, community, US, world); Others (non-dominant race, ethnicity, religion, nations); Celebrities; and Fun (recreation, entertainment, fiction). Obviously, every article could have several different threads, with some thread combinations often occurring together (for instance, Consumption and Body). Finally, I measured the spacial dimensions of every article and fiction story. I saved all of these coded notes

in a computer file so that I could easily search by keyword.

I structured my inquiry and analysis of the discourse in Chapters 3 and 6 around *Seventeen's* Table of Contents. Because the function of a Table of Contents is to categorize editorial content, it represents the magazine's own discursive mapping of its text. During *Seventeen's* first year, articles were organized in the Table of Contents under the topical categories of, from top to bottom, "What You Wear," "How You Feel and Look," "Getting Along in the World," "Your Mind," and "Having Fun." In January 1945, they added "Fiction" to these categories. Although I collected data on the stories that made up the Fiction category, I eventually decided not to include this data in my qualitative analysis, choosing to focus exclusively on the magazine's non-fiction editorial ideology. Upon war's end, in November 1946, *Seventeen* added a new category called "Food and Home Doings," which receives considerable coverage in Chapter 6.

In *Seventeen's* first issue, Helen Valentine wrote a letter of introduction to the reader (later referring to it as the magazine's "credo"), setting out her concerns for "how you dress," "how you feel and how you look," "what you are," "what you think," and "what you do" as the parameters for the magazine's editorial content. (This is covered in detail in Chapter 3: *Seventeen* at War.) Because I see the original five Table of Contents categories as generally corresponding with Valentine's original reader concerns, I assessed the value that *Seventeen* actually put on each of these areas by measuring the magazine's allotment of page space to articles under each of the Table of Contents categories, and then converting the spacial coverage to

percentages. I reported these results in Tables 1 and 3 in Appendix C.

These quantitative measurements served as the backbone upon which my qualitative analysis fleshed out the editorial discourse and representations. After discerning the amount of value *Seventeen* put on each topical area, I then went back and investigated the major discursive themes within each category of articles. Although I strove to accurately portray the most common themes in each topic category, this was a far more subjective process than coding for space, and therefore more open to my interests and interpretation. Thus, I would describe my overall textual method as being less a “content analysis” than what journalist historian Marion Marzolf calls “content assessment,” a process she describes as “reading, sifting, weighing, comparing and analyzing the evidence in order to tell the story.”⁴

In analyzing *Seventeen*’s covers and pictures, I used a strategy inspired by the semiological work of Erving Goffman and Roland Barthes.⁵ The “stories” that the pictures revealed to me and that I in turn relayed in my own text were filtered through the prism of my mind’s eye; another eye might have seen a very different picture. Still, as other theorists have noted, texts as material documents – whether discourse or image – give cues on how to read them and place limits on how they can be read.⁶

Finally, in order to place the text within its social context, I integrated information from the U.S. government’s *Magazine War Guide*, monographs about the war and postwar periods, and newspaper and magazine articles from the period.

Chapter 4: Teena Goes to Market

In “Teena Goes to Market,” I engaged in an in-depth exegesis and discursive

analysis of *Seventeen's* original promotional campaign. My analysis drew primarily on materials from the Estelle Ellis Collection, an archival collection of *Seventeen* memorabilia, housed at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. This extensive collection includes market research reports, correspondence, survey data, advertisements, and promotional literature for *Seventeen* magazine from 1944 to 1950. I also drew on Estelle Ellis's oral history, my interviews with her, some of her personal materials, and newspaper and magazine articles about the time period. The promotional documents that I chose to highlight, my reading of them, and the themes I identified were based on my personal perceptions and revelations. Once again, while I tried to accurately represent these materials and their narratives, some personal interpretation was inevitable.

Chapter 5: Teena Means Business

In many ways, Chapter 5, "Teena Means Business," is a companion chapter to Chapters 3 and 6. For this chapter, I compared and contrasted *Seventeen's* advertisements during the two 13-month sample periods (September 1944 to September 1945; September 1949 to September 1950). I began by reading and taking notes on every advertisement, both text and pictures; I also measured each ad for spacial coverage, and noted whether it appeared before or after the magazine's monowell [see Endnote #25 for Chapter 5 for an explanation of the monowell system in the magazine]. Finally, I organized the different kinds of advertised products into seven categories, which I labeled: "Body Wear" (clothing, undergarments, shoes, accessories, jewelry); "Body Care" (cosmetics, haircare, perfume, feminine hygiene,

deodorant, and medicine); “Entertainment” (movies and records); “Education/Employment” (home correspondence courses, vocational schools, colleges); “Snacks” (sodas and candy); “Domestic” (linens, cookbooks, hope chests, sterling silver); and “Miscellaneous” (pens, paper, wallets). Similarly to my method with the editorial Table of Contents categories, I calculated the percent of advertising space devoted to each category of advertisements. I report these results in Table 2, Appendix C. Then, using this categorical quantitative data as a guide, I explored the discursive narratives of exemplar ads. As with my qualitative analysis of the editorial content, I strove to fairly portray these advertisements, while remaining cognizant that my assessment was filtered through my own interpretation.

Chapter 7: Divorce in the Family

Chapter 7 is made up of three different sections: the denouement (a description of the events leading up to Helen Valentine’s dismissal from *Seventeen*); a scholarly explanation for the changes that took place at *Seventeen* over its first six years; and an examination of how *Seventeen*’s institutional history developed over time. For the denouement, I tried to tell the story using the voices of the people who were there at the time; to do this, I drew from my open-ended interviews with promotion director Estelle Ellis and staffers Alberta Eiseman and Ingrid Loewenstein Sladkus. I also looked to Helen Valentine’s oral history, Walter Annenberg’s biographies, and personal correspondence between Valentine and others (including Walter Annenberg). In addition, I also drew on magazine and newspaper accounts of the postwar period events (especially Helen Valentine’s resignation) at *Seventeen*.

For my analysis of the development of *Seventeen's* institutional history, I began by investigating how *Seventeen* remembered its origins in its Birthday/Anniversary issues: September, 1954, September, 1964, September, 1969, September, 1974, September, 1984, October, 1994, and September, 2004. Finally, I examined the public discourse on *Seventeen's* institutional history, following its trail through newspaper and magazine articles about the magazine and its creators in the 60+ years following its birth.

Research Issues and Challenges

Sampling Magazine Issues

In research and writing this dissertation, I encountered dilemmas necessitating decisions that were neither easy nor definitively right or wrong. Chief among these was my decision to sample magazine issues from two time periods for my textual analyses of *Seventeen's* editorial and advertising discourse (Chapters 3, 5, and 6). In a perfect world, I would have gathered and analyzed extensive data on each and every magazine from my entire period (from September 1944 to September 1950).

However, closely reading and taking notes on each issue took me approximately one week. Thus, practicality led me to select the sampled periods. Even then, I still spent more than half a year just reading and collecting data from these 26 issues. In order to make sure that I did not miss any relevant discursive events and to follow the staffing changes at *Seventeen* during the interim years, however, I did read and take less detailed notes of all of the interim issues, from October 1945 through August 1949. This proved to be a valuable undertaking, as I collected a lot of interesting

information on the staffers and their discursive constructions of themselves within the magazine text – something that I would like to include in a future monograph. In addition, I also learned that the shift in *Seventeen's* discourse began almost immediately upon the end of World War II.

Memories

Although I had previously read about the problems (and pleasures) of memory-based research, it took doing it myself to really *begin* gaining any real understanding. One of my first lessons came via Helen Valentine's oral history, in which she described having first found her inspiration for *Seventeen* in a picture of a crowd of teenagers entering the United Nations building in New York City. Imagine my surprise, then, when I later learned through my research that the U.N. didn't officially exist until October 24, 1945 – well after *Seventeen* began publication. For me, Helen's quote served as a material reminder of the fallibility (and/or adaptability) of human memory. It also took me back to Alessandro Portelli's work on memory, and his assertion that

Subjectivity is as much the business of history as the more visible 'facts'. What the informant believes is indeed a historical *fact* (that is, the *fact* that he or she believes it) just as much as what 'really' happened.⁷

As a neophyte historian, this instance taught me two related lessons. First, that I couldn't blindly accept people's memories as a representation of "Reality." Secondly, following Portelli, that memory narratives reveal as much – if not more – about the storytellers' personal "truths" than about historical "facts" – more about meanings than events.⁸ Thus, each person's memories, regardless of "factuality," told

me something valuable about themselves and their perceptions, and contributed to and deepened the overall historical narrative. I became even more aware of this as I began to compare the memories of the eyewitnesses and found each person sharing a slightly different or even contradictory story, in which they appeared as both narrator and protagonist. To paraphrase Portelli, their narratives “tell us not just what [they] did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did.”⁹ Indeed, as Helen Valentine, Walter Annenberg, and Estelle Ellis publicly shared their individual versions of *Seventeen*’s birth story, they simultaneously engaged in constructing their own selves and legacies.¹⁰

Comparing stories led me to another revelation: Equally important, yet much less noticeable, is what each individual leaves out of their narrative.¹¹ For example, years after their first meeting, Helen didn’t report that she spoke to Walter of the consumer potential of young women. Walter, in turn, remembered his insistence that the magazine be wholesome, but nothing about Helen’s service mandate. Their individual omissions seem to indicate that both wanted their own legacy to be that of creating a service magazine for teens, and not for the magazine’s concurrent service to business. Again, they were not just telling stories, but also doing the work of identity-construction.

As a counterpoint to the highly subjective memory narratives, I often used media to serve as my “objective” observers. Of course, media reports and reporters are not without their own subjectivity, but the magazines and newspapers of the time period didn’t have quite the stake in the events at *Seventeen* as did the principal

players. Thus, whenever possible, I placed people's memories of events against/amidst the media reports of the day.

Subjectivity and Bias

My discussion of the challenges of dealing with memories leads into a related problem that I wrestled with in researching and writing about *Seventeen's* origins: the subjectivity and bias of my interviewees, as well as my own. In regard to the former, I quickly recognized early on in my researching that two entrenched and oppositional camps had developed in regard to *Seventeen's* origins, each camp offering a very different narrative about what had occurred. For the Valentine camp, whose surviving members include Estelle Ellis, Barbara Valentine Hertz, and Valentine Hertz Kass, the story told is a Tragedy, one in which Helen Valentine was professionally, economically, and emotionally "screwed" (Ellis's word) by two important people in her life, *Seventeen's* owner, Walter Annenberg, and her best friend and mentoree, Alice Dickey Thompson Beaton. For the Annenberg camp, whose version is told through biographies and media accounts about the Annenberg family, it is an American Success Story, one that portrays *Seventeen* as the product of Walter's Annenberg's business genius and among his many enduring legacies. Indeed, in his biographies, Helen Valentine plays nothing more than a bit role in the story of *Seventeen*, portrayed as a former employee worthy of no more than several pages in a several hundred page examination of his life.

As the narrator in this retelling of the story of *Seventeen's* origins, I too have both subjectivity and bias, and my voice is the dominant one. I say this realistically,

and not apologetically. Shulamit Reinharz describes research in the social sciences as being split between two “social camps”: “[...] those who wish to depersonalize the process of knowing in the hopes of obtaining ‘pure’ knowledge and those who acknowledge that since the self of the observer is always implicated, it should be converted into an invaluable tool.”¹² Valerie Yow, in her article “Do I Like Them Too Much?,” follows the growth of this latter camp among historians (e.g., Benedetto Croce and R. G. Collingwood), anthropologists (e.g., Victor Turner, James Clifford, and Clifford Geertz), and sociologists (e.g., Arlene Kaplan Daniels and Dorothy Smith).¹³ Feminists, in particular have been at the forefront of this movement, charging that “feminine” relational research strategies such as “intuition, empathy, and passion” have been mistakenly devalued in the masculinist “objectivity” paradigm.¹⁴ As a feminist sociologist, I put myself squarely in this latter camp, recognizing my subjectivity, addressing it, challenging it when possible, but also wielding it as “an invaluable tool,” fired by passion and tempered by ideals.

One of my ideals for this project was to give voice to the many previously unheard voices in the narrative of *Seventeen's* origins. Because of this, I lament the omission of the words and perspective of Alice Thompson Beaton, whose voice (beyond the wonderful articles she wrote) is woefully lacking from this story. I spent hours and hours trying to follow her trail after her own dismissal from *Seventeen*. Her rather common professional name (Thompson) and exit from the world of magazine publishing made this difficult; however, I finally discovered that she had died in the Virgin Islands in 1985. Further scouting to find her son and daughter also

proved in vain, although I did track down a nephew who would not return my phone calls. Given more time, I would have continued this search – and I plan to resume it for the next level of this work.

The fact that so many of the eyewitnesses have died reduced the number of voices I could draw from in weaving the story together. For instance, I had to rely on Walter Annenberg's biographies for his side of the story. However, I am less disturbed by any exclusion of Annenberg's voice than I am of Alice Thompson's (and others), as his story has been the privileged version, told often and publicly. On the other hand, my interviews with *Seventeen* editorial assistants Ingrid Loewenstein Sladkus and Alberta Eiseman, whose vantage point from the lower end of the magazine hierarchy offered a much needed counterpoint perspective to that of their authorities, could conceivably have challenged the version of Ellis and Valentine's family members. However, their observations, in conjunction with the time period media reports on the events at *Seventeen*, only served to strengthen my own perception of the bitter injustice meted out to Helen Valentine by Walter Annenberg. Thus, after years of "reading, sifting, weighing, comparing and analyzing the evidence in order to tell the story,"¹⁵ I have written a Tragedy.

APPENDIX B

Images

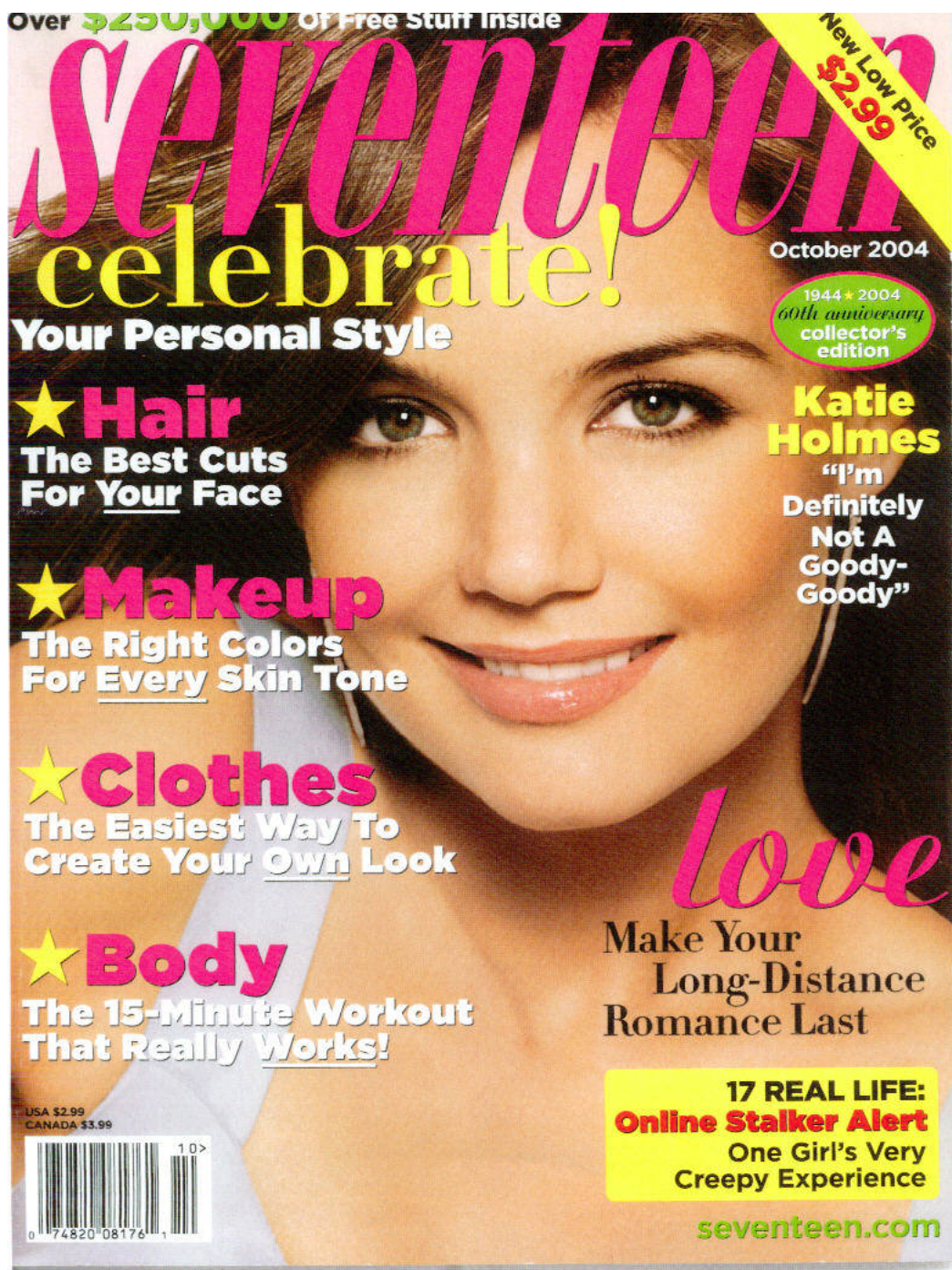


Figure 1: 60th Anniversary Cover



Figure 3: First Cover

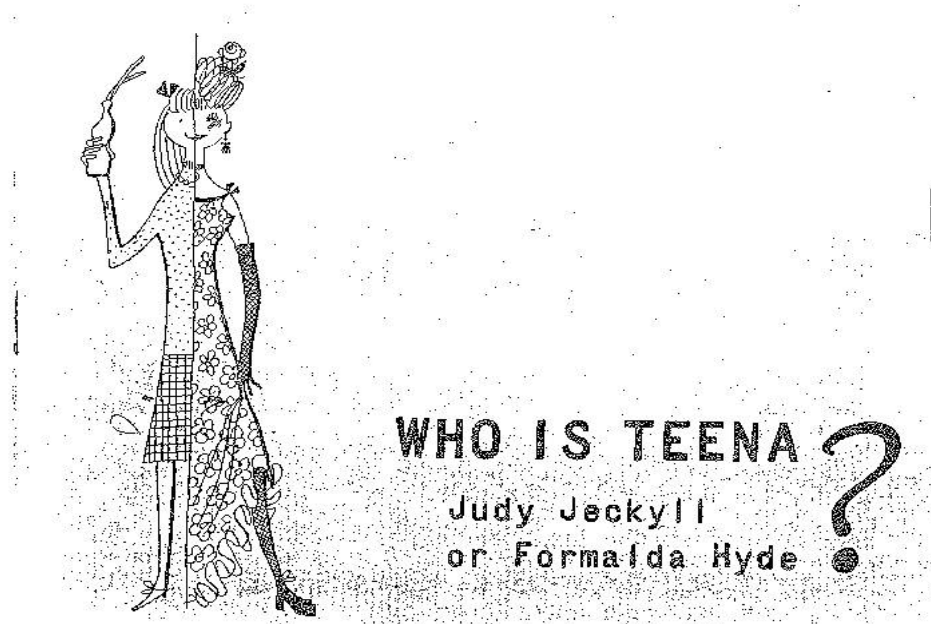


Figure 4: Who Is Teena?

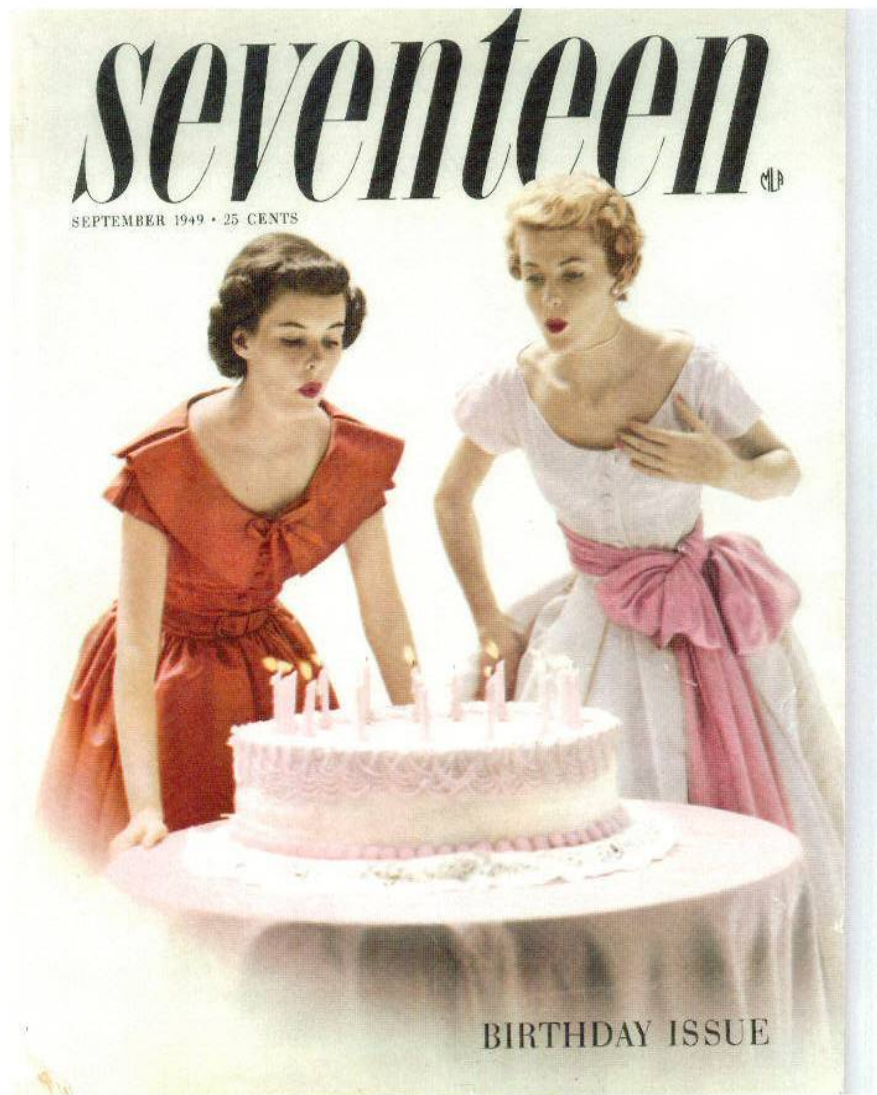


Figure 5: 5th Birthday Cover

APPENDIX C

Tables

TABLE 1: Editorial Content as Organized by Table of Contents in *Seventeen*: T1

T1: 9/44-9/45														
Table of Contents	Sep-44	Oct-44	Nov-44	Dec-44	Jan-45	Feb-45	Mar-45	Apr-45	May-45	Jun-45	Jul-45	Aug-45	Sep-45	Avg
Issue Size	91 pp	95 pp	103 pp	123 pp	123 pp	163 pp	163 pp	171 pp	171 pp	171 pp	123 pp	171 pp	171 pp	
Special Issue	First			Xmas				Girl/Boy			Your America		1st Bday	
What You Wear	23%	24%	22%	19%	24%	19%	20%	15%	16%	19%	15%	26%	25%	20%
How You Feel/Look	12%	9%	9%	10%	7%	10%	7%	7%	5%	9%	8%	8%	6%	8%
Fiction	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	9%	12%	16%	10%	7%	12%	11%	13%	8%
Getting Along/World	15%	23%	19%	20%	20%	21%	27%	31%	15%	21%	8%	10%	13%	19%
Your Mind	25%	16%	19%	24%	16%	22%	17%	18%	21%	18%	35%	26%	17%	21%
[Food & Home]	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Having Fun	26%	29%	31%	27%	23%	19%	17%	14%	32%	25%	21%	20%	26%	24%
Ed - % of total copy	52.50%	50%	53%	48%	45%	41%	42%	41%	40%	41%	46%	43%	41%	45%

TABLE 2: Product Advertising in *Seventeen*: T1 And T2

T1: 9/44-9/45														
Products (% of ads)	9/44	10/44	11/44	12/44	1/45	2/45	3/45	4/45	5/45	6/45	7/45	8/45	9/45	Avg
Special Issue	First			Xmas				Girl/Boy			Your America		1st Bday	
Body Wear	57%	63%	60%	74%	82%	77%	80%	70%	68%	56%	53%	76%	68%	68%
Body Care	21%	25%	27%	19%	8%	17%	14%	22%	19%	32%	34%	16%	25%	21%
Entertain	14%	12%	9%	3%	8%	1%	2%	3%	3%	3%	7%	4%	4%	6%
Educ/Empl	4%	1%	3%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	<1%	2%	2%	<1%	<1%	2%
Misc	4%	1%	<1%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	2%	<1%	1%	0	1%
Snacks	1%	0	1%	1%	0	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%
Domestic	0	0	0	0	0	1%	0	0	1%	2%	0	1%	<1%	<1%
Ads - %	47.5	50%	47%	52%	55%	59%	58%	59%	60%	59%	54%	57%	59%	55%

T2: 9/49-9/50														
Products (% of ads)	9/49	10/49	11/49	12/49	1/50	2/50	3/50	4/50	5/50	6/50	7/50	8/50	9/50	Avg
Special Issue	5th Bday	Your Home	Your Parents	Xmas	Your School			Girl/Boy	It's All Yours	Pretty		Back to School	6th Bday	
Body Wear	82%	70%	73%	57%	60%	73%	78%	73%	75%	53%	28%	90%	80%	69%
Body Care	11%	17%	14%	19%	17%	16%	13%	17%	12%	28%	52%	7%	11%	18%
Entertain	2%	2%	3%	10%	11%	1%	2%	1%	4%	6%	6%	1%	1%	4%
Educ/Empl	1%	3%	1%	2%	5%	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	4%	1%	1%	2%
Misc	0%	0%	1%	1%	0	2%	0	0	0	1%	<1%	0	0	<1%
Snacks	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	0	1%	<1%	4%	<1%	1%	1%
Domestic	4%	7%	7%	10%	6%	7%	5%	8%	5%	8%	5%	1%	6%	6%
Ads - %	64%	57%	61%	46%	43%	58%	60%	61%	62%	55%	27%	65%	59%	55%

TABLE 3. Editorial Content as Organized by Table of Contents in *Seventeen*: T2

T2: 9/49-9/50

Table of Contents	Sep-49	Oct-49	Nov-49	Dec-49	Jan-50	Feb-50	Mar-50	Apr-50	May-50	Jun-50	Jul-50	Aug-50	Sep-50	Avg
Issue Size	247 pp	179 pp	195 pp	123 pp	123 pp	171 pp	227 pp	211 pp	211 pp	131 pp	115 pp	299 pp	227 pp	
	5th Bday	Your Home	Your Parents	Xmas	Your School			Girl/Boy	It's All Yours	How-to-be-Pretty		Back-to-School	6th Bday	
Special Issue	28%	22%	22%	22%	18%	26%	24%	25%	20%	24%	22%	30%	27%	24%
What You Wear	4%	5%	4%	6%	5%	5%	4%	5%	6%	21%	3%	9%	4%	6%
How You Feel/Look	17%	17%	13%	18%	16%	23%	16%	15%	18%	19%	19%	12%	13%	17%
Fiction	9%	9%	11%	8%	21%	6%	12%	13%	15%	6%	10%	4%	11%	10%
Getting Along/World	13%	11%	15%	6%	11%	7%	9%	10%	9%	3%	2%	6%	10%	9%
Your Mind	10%	17%	8%	15%	14%	14%	13%	11%	7%	9%	9%	16%	12%	12%
Food & Home	19%	19%	27%	25%	15%	19%	22%	22%	25%	18%	35%	22%	22%	22%
Having Fun	36%	43%	39%	54%	57%	41%	40%	39%	38%	45%	73%	35%	41%	45%
Ed – % of total copy														

TABLE 4. Editorial Content as Organized by Table of Contents in *Seventeen*: Comparison Of T1 And T2

Table of Contents	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Avg
What You Wear	5%	2%	0%	3%	-6%	7%	4%	10%	4%	5%	7%	4%	2%	4%
How You Feel/Look	-8%	-4%	-5%	-4%	-2%	-5%	-3%	-2%	1%	12%	-5%	1%	-2%	-2%
Fiction	17%	17%	13%	18%	6%	14%	4%	-1%	8%	12%	7%	1%	0%	9%
Getting Along/World	-6%	-14%	-8%	-12%	1%	-15%	-15%	-18%	0%	-15%	-2%	-6%	-2%	-9%
Your Mind	-12%	-5%	-4%	-18%	-5%	-15%	-8%	-8%	-12%	-15%	-33%	-20%	-7%	-12%
Food & Home	10%	17%	8%	15%	14%	14%	13%	11%	7%	9%	9%	16%	12%	12%
Having Fun	-7%	-10%	-4%	-2%	-7%	0%	5%	8%	-7%	-7%	14%	2%	-4%	-2%

NOTES

Chapter 1: Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall

1. Media scholar Douglas Kellner coined the term “media culture” as a preferable alternative to the term, “popular culture.” See Kellner 1995b, 35. Other theorists prior to Kellner also found the term problematic, including Jameson 1979, and Horkheimer and Adorno 1975 [1944].

2. Croteau and Hoynes 2000, 3.

3. Douglas 1994, 11.

4. Croteau and Hoynes 2000; Grossberg, Wartella and Whitney 1998; Horkheimer and Adorno 1944/1975; Gerbner 1998; Kellner 1995b; Tuchman 1978. Harold Lasswell, cited in Tuchman, asserts that media have supplanted the Church as a primary disseminator of knowledge (3).

5. Kellner 1995 a & b.

6. Schor 1998, 9.

7. Bordo 1993; Brumberg 1997; Croteau & Hoynes 2000; Currie 1997, 1999; Friedan 1963; Horkheimer & Adorno 1975 [1944]; Jhally 1995b; Kellner 1995b, 1988; Kilbourne 2000, 1999; McCracken 1993; Ritzer, Goodman & Wiedenhof 2001; Schor 1998; Wolf 1991. According to Fredric Jameson (1979, 144), the products of mass culture cannot be successful with the audience if they do not provide these Utopian images along with the less palatable ideology of discontent: “they cannot manipulate unless they offer some genuine shred of content as a fantasy bribe to the public about to be so manipulated.”

8. Kellner 1995a, 1995b; Ritzer, et al. 2001; Schor 1998.

9. For example Fiske 1989a, 1989b, 1992; Grossberg; McRobbie 1994, 3; Walters 1999.

10. For example Gerbner 1993; Hill Collins 2000; Kellner 1995b; Tuchman 1978.

11. Currie 1997, 1999; Smith 1987, 1990.

12. Bartky 1988; Bordo 1993; Currie 1999; Douglas 1994; Faludi 1991; Friedan 1963; Hill Collins 2000; McCracken 1993; Smith 1987; Tuchman 1978; Wolf 1991.

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13. Laqueur 1990; see also Shahar 1994; Warren 1998; Wolf 1991, p. 13.
 14. Bartky 1988; Bordo 1993, 1999; Kilbourne 1994; Rothblum 1994; Striegel-Moore, Silberstein & Rodin 1986.
 15. Wolf 1991, 12.
 16. Ibid.
 17. Bordo 1993; Kilbourne 1999; McCracken 1993; Schor 1998; Wolf 1991.
 18. Bordo 1993; Kilbourne 1999; McCracken 1993; Wolf 1991.
 19. Schor 1998.
 20. Cohen 2003, 75; see also Zukin 2004, 33.
 21. Schor 1998, 76.
 22. Kilbourne 1999, 35, 44; see also Cohen 2003, 319.
 23. Cook and Kaiser 2004, 204.
 24. See Wolf 1991, 20, for example.
 25. Cortese 1999; Dinnerstein & Weitz 1995; Glassner 1992; Wolf 1991, 14.
 26. Cortese 1999.
 27. Bazzini, et al. 1997; Cortese 1999; Glassner 1992.
 28. Cortese 1999; Dinnerstein & Weitz 1998; Connell calls this hegemonic masculinity.
 29. Bartky 1988; Bordo 1993; Cortese 1999; Kilbourne 1995, 1999; Mazur 1986; Seid 1989, 1994; Wolf 1991.
 30. Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz & Thompson 1980; Hesse-Biber 1989; Mazur 1986; Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson & Kelly 1986; Striegel-Moore, et al. 1986. The contemporary thin ideal is not without some subtle variation, however, as it currently encompasses three types: the extremely thin body with small breasts, the extremely thin body with large breasts, and the extremely thin and ultra-toned body (See Bartky 1988; Bordo 1993; Hesse-Biber 1996; Heywood 1998; Owen & Laurel-Seller 2000; Seid 1989; Striegel-Moore, et al. 1986; Wolf 1991 on these body types). It is important to note that none of these body types occurs completely “naturally” in

most adult woman – indeed, only 5% of adult women have any of these body types. The extremely thin body is more akin to the body of an “adolescent boy or a newly pubescent girl,” and most often has to be starved into submission. The characteristics that make up the second body ideal – thin with large breasts – are generally incongruent in nature and must be obtained via man-made procedures, such as plastic surgery or padded bras. The third body type, thin and ultra-toned, takes significant workout time to accomplish.

31. Striegel-Moore, et al. 1986.

32. Faludi 1991; Glassner 1992.

33. Bordo 1993; Davis 1993; Sullivan 2001; Wolf 1991.

34. Source: American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. Accessed on July 30, 2007 from www.msnbc.msn.com/id/19979847/.

35. Davis 1993; Faludi 1991; Sullivan 2001.

36. Davis 1993; Sullivan 2001; Wolf 1991.

37. Morgan 1998.

38. Banner 1983; Chernin 1981; Hesse-Biber 1996; Mazur 1986; Rothblum 1994; Seid 1994.

39. The Gibson Girl look of the late 1800's liberated the leg from long skirts and made its shape matter. The Flapper, whose body was strikingly reminiscent of today's ultra-thin waif, kept her legs uncovered, but her long slender dress could only be worn well by a body sans hips. With the Wall Street Crash of the late 1920's came a dramatic change in fashion, as hemlines dropped to once again veil the legs, and waists cinched tight (perhaps a material manifestation of the need to “tighten one's financial belt”). Two decades later, in the 1940's, Betty Grable brought back the leg in her swimsuit pinup picture, while *Esquire* magazine illustrator, Alberto Vargas, “drew” the breast into the forefront of women's body ideal. From the 1920's until the 1960's, the ideal bust grew larger, only to be (temporarily) deflated by the body standards heralded by Twiggy's stick-straight figure. See Banner 1983; Brumberg 1997; Mazur 1986; Hesse-Biber 1996 and Sullivan 2001 for extended descriptions of the relationship between fashion and women's body ideal.

40. Seid 1994.

41. Bartky 1988; Brumberg 1997.

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42. Brumberg 1997; Seid 1994; Sullivan 2001.
 43. Bartky 1988; Bordo 1993; Brumberg 1997.
 44. Brumberg 1997.
 45. Bartky 1988; Brumberg 1997; Tiggemann & Kenyon 1998.
 46. Bartky 1988.
 47. Bartky 1988.
 48. Bartky 1988; Brumberg 1997.
 49. Kaw 1994, 1998.
 50. Bordo 1993; Gillespie 1998; Hill Collins 2000; Kaw 1994, 1998; Rothblum 1994.
 51. See Chodorow 1998 [1978]; Connell 1987; Mies 1998; Rubin 1975; Smith 1987 for discussions of the role of women's complicity in their own subordination.
 52. Bordo 1993; Bartky 1988.
 53. See Foucault 1995.
 54. Bordo 1993.
 55. Bordo 1993; Dellinger and Williams 1997; Hamermesh and Biddle 1994; Jackson 1992; Schor 1998, 38; Zukin & Maguire 2004, 182.
 56. Featherstone 2001; Hesse-Biber 1996; McCracken 1993; Wolf 1991
 57. Bartky 1988; Hesse-Biber 1996; Striegel-Moore, et al. 1986.
 58. Bordo 1993; Brumberg 1997; McCracken 1993.
 59. Average circulations for the first six months of 2006: *Good Housekeeping*, 4,609,209; *Cosmopolitan*, 2,908,861; *Glamour*, 2,248,961; *Seventeen*, 2,013,357. "Top 100 ABC magazines by average circulation, 2006, First Six Months." Accessed on May 4, 2007 at www.magazine.org/circulation/circulation_trends_and_magazine_handbook/.
 60. Currie 1997, 1999; Duffy and Gotcher 1996; Durham 1996, 1998;

Friedan
1963; Massoni 2004; McCracken 1993; Peirce 1990, 1993; Ruggiero and Weston
1985; Smith 1987 1990; Wolf 1991.

61. See McCracken, 1993, Chapter 1, "The Cover: Window to the Future
Self," 13-36; Also Kitch 2001, 4.

62. McCracken, 1993.

63. Kitch, 2001, 4.

64. Berger 1972, 132.

65. e.g., McCracken 1993; Peirce 1997.

66. Johnson and Prijatel 1998, 188. "Piffle" was period jargon for "trivial
nonsense"; "No passion" was a reference to service magazines exclusion of
"sentimental short stories."

67. Ibid, 190. For example, neither *Good Housekeeping* or *Ladies' Home
Journal* originally included features on beauty, health, and diet, but both do, today.

68. Bordo 1993, 201. See also Bartky 1988; Hesse-Biber 1996; Kilbourne
1999; Malkin, et al. 1999; From a historical perspective, it is interesting to note that
the two time periods with the highest levels of reported female anorexia (the 1920's
and today) were also the time periods in which the thin body ideal was being heavily
promoted in women's magazines (Brumberg 1997; Silverstein, Peterson and Perdue
1986)

69. Friedan 1963.

70. Ibid, 46.

71. Ibid, 44

72. Ibid, 46.

73. Cantor 1987; Friedan 1963; Joliffe and Catlett 1994; McCracken 1993;
Peirce 1997.

74. Butler and Paisley 1980; Massoni 2004; Peirce 1997.

75. Busby and Leichty 1993; Durham 1996; McCracken 1993; Paff and
Lakner 1997; Ruggiero and Weston 1985.

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76. Bordo 1993; Kilbourne 1999; McCracken 1993; Wolf 1991
77. model. Thesaurus.com. *Roget's New Millennium™ Thesaurus, First Edition* (v 1.3.1). Lexico Publishing Group, LLC.
<http://thesaurus.reference.com/browse/model> (accessed: May 06, 2007).
78. Bordo 1993; Crane 1999; Kilbourne 1995, 2000.
79. Kilbourne 2000.
80. Brumberg 1998; Cortese 1999; Currie 1999; McCracken 1993.
81. Goffman 1979.
82. Crane 1999.
83. Erving Goffman (1979). *Gender advertisements*. NY: Harper & Row.
84. Adler and Adler 1998; Chodorow [1978] 1999; Sadker and Sadker 1994; Thorne 1993.
85. Brumberg 1997; Gilligan 1993 [1982]; Orenstein 1994; Pipher 1994.
86. Currie 1997, 1999.
87. Peirce 1993, 66.
88. Crane 1999.
89. Currie 1997, 1999; Peirce 1993.
90. McCracken 1993.
91. Budgeon and Currie 1995; Currie 1999; Duffy and Gotcher 1996; Evans, Rutberg, Sather, and Turner 1991; Signorielli 1997.
92. Budgeon and Currie 1995; Currie 1999; Duffy and Gotcher 1996; Evans, et al. 1991; McCracken 1993; Peirce 1990; Signorielli 1997.
93. Budgeon and Currie 1995; Duffy and Gotcher 1996; McCracken 1993.
94. Durham 1996, 1998.
95. Durham 1998.

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96. McCracken 1993.
 97. Duffy & Gotcher 1996.
 98. Durham 1996, 1998.
 99. Durham 1996, 1998.
 100. *Standard Rate and Data Service* 1996 [emphasis added].
 101. Massoni 2004.
 102. Duffy & Gotcher 1996; Massoni 2004.
 103. Griswold 1994.
 104. Viswanath and Demers 1999, 7.
 105. Acker 1990, 1999.
 106. Croteau and Hoynes 2000; Currie 1997; Gerbner 1998; Kellner 1995b; Smith 1987, 1999; Steeves 1993.
 107. Bielby and Bielby 1996; Croteau and Hoynes 2000; Gist 1993; Lafky 1993; Steeves 1993.
 108. Dorothy Smith 1987.
 109. Johnson 1993, Zuckerman 1998.
 110. Joliffe and Catlett 1994.
 111. Milkie 2002.
 112. Milkie 2002, 855. Dorothy Smith (1987) coined the term “relations of ruling” to define the structures, practices and discourses that organize relations in society and maintain the rule of one group over another.
 113. Bagdikian 2000; Croteau & Hoynes 2000, 2001; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes and Sasson. 1992; Gerbner 1998; hooks 1996; Horkheimer and Adorno 1944; Kellner 1995a; Kilbourne 1999, 34; McCracken 1993; Steeves 1993; Tuchman 1978.
 114. Gamson, et al. 1992; Kilbourne 1999, 35.
 115. Bagdikian 2000; Croteau & Hoynes 2000; Gamson, et al. 1992; Steinem

1995.

116. Kilbourne 1999, 36.

117. McCracken 1993; Steinem 1995.

118. Connell 1998; Steinem 1995.

119. McCracken 1993.

120. Steinem 1995.

121. McCracken 1993, 38-39

122. Steinem 1995, 119.

123. Currie 1999; McCracken 1993.

124. Steinem 1995.

125. For the first point, see Top 100 Audit Bureau Circulation Magazines, according to the Magazine Publishers of America, accessed on July 27, 2007 from http://www.magazine.org/circulation/circulation_trends_and_magazine_handbook/22175.cfm. For the second point, see *Seventeen* Media Kit, accessed on April 23, 2007 from http://www.seventeenmediakit.com/r5/showkiosk.asp?listing_id=455839&category_id=31770.

126. "PRIMEDIA Announces the Launch of *Seventeen* Magazine in India; A Total of 14 International Editions for Magazine, Category Leader." *PR Newsire*, November 26, 2002.

127. Friedan 1963.

128. e.g., Budgeon and Currie 1995; Duffy & Gotcher 1996; Durham 1996; Evans, et al. 1991; Peirce 1990, 1993.

129. Smith 1987.

Chapter 2: The Birth of the Teen Magazine

1. Cook 2004, 91; Palladino 1996, 4-5; Schrum 2004, 11-12.

2. Schrum 2004, 18-19.

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3. Ascertained through a key word search for “teen” using *The New York Times* archival database (covering the years 1857-present). Also, I will base my spelling of the word on its preferred usage during a given time period; therefore, I will refer to “teen-agers” when writing about the 1940's, and to “teenagers” when writing about later periods.
 4. “‘Tricks’ Bring Crowd to Buy War Stamps,” *New York Times*, October 18, 1942, 5.
 5. Ascertained through a word search using *The New York Times* archival database (covering the years 1857-present).
 6. Lord & Taylor advertisement, *New York Times*, October 4, 1934, 5.
 7. See Schrum 2004; also Cook 2004.
 8. Damon-Moore 1994; Scanlon 1995; Zuckerman 1998.
 9. Peirce 1995.
 10. *The Writer's Market*, 1943/44.
 11. *The Writers Market*, 1943/44.
 12. Many of the youth magazines of the day, in fact, catered to a religious constituency, including *The Catholic Boy*, *Catholic Student*, *The Challenge* (for Presbyterian youth), *Children's Friend*, *The Christian Youth*, *The Friend*, *Girls Today* (Methodist), *The High Trail*, *Junior Catholic Messenger*, and *Teens* (for “Christian youth between 13 and 19).
 13. See Reynolds 1955 and Peck 1995 for thorough coverage of the history of *Mademoiselle*.
 14. Reynolds 1955.
 15. “Teen-Age Market,” *Business Week*, June 8, 1946, 72.
 16. Peck 1995; Reynolds 1955; Zuckerman 1998.
 17. Blum 1976; Covert 2003; Foner 1998, Chapter 10, “Fighting for Freedom”; Fox 1975; Honey 1984.
 18. *Magazine War Guide* (Washington, D.C.: Office of War Information).
 19. *War Jobs for Women*, 1942.

20. *War Jobs for Women*, 1942, 45.

21. Cited in Honey 1984, endnote #29, 224-225.

22. Blum 1976; Cohen 2003; Foner 1998.

23. Reskin and Padavic 1994.

24. Ellis Telephone Interview, July 13, 2004.

25. Blum 1976; Covert 2003.

26. "Teen-age Market: It's Terrif." *Business Week*, June 8, 1946, 72.

27. Unless otherwise indicated, most of the information in this biographical section comes from Helen Valentine's oral history taken on March 9, 1982, when Helen was 89 years old. See Valentine, Helen. Oral History. March 9, 1982. William E. Wiener Oral History Library of The American Jewish Committee (New York City Public Library).

28. Valentine Oral History, 1.

29. Valentine Oral History, 9.

29. Valentine Oral History, 9.

30. Valentine Oral History, 1.

31. Valentine Oral History, 3.

32. Valentine Oral History, 4.

33. Valentine Oral History, 2.

34. Valentine Oral History, 2.

35. See also Reynolds 1955.

36. Valentine Oral History, 14.

37. Valentine Oral History, 15.

38. Valentine Oral History, 14-15.

39. Reynolds 1955; also Telephone Interview with Barbara Valentine Hertz,

February 27, 2006.

40. *Better Than Beauty* was re-released for publication in 2002 by Chronicle Books, LLC.

41. In retrospect, one is left to wonder whether Alice Thompson really should have taken her own etiquette advice, as stealing the job of one's best friend and mentor certainly seems the height of rudeness.

42. Peck 1995; Zuckerman 1998.

43. The first of these daughters died soon after birth. See Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.

44. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999. This affectionate sibling relationship between the Annenberg sisters and their little brother would be challenged and eventually critically damaged after Walter became the primary beneficiary of his father's estate.

45. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.

46. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.

47. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.

48. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.

49. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.

50. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.

51. Cooney 1982, 18.

52. Cooney 1982, 18, 52.

53. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999. Later in Annenberg's life, Peddie's second-rate status would become a sore spot of sorts, and he donated millions of dollars to the school to improve its standing. The school's website documents the importance of Annenberg's contribution in its history; see <http://www.peddie.org/podium/default.aspx?t=16628> (Accessed on July 16, 2007).

54. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.

55. Cooney 1982, 182.

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56. See Gaines 1985.
57. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.
58. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.
59. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999. Krancer quote in Ogden, 247.
60. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.
61. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.
62. Gaines 1985.
63. Beinhoff and Bekken 1995; Seebohm 1982. See also Zuckerman 1998.
64. Scotford 1999; Zuckerman, 1998. Also see "Seventeen: A Unique Case Study," *Tide*, April 15, 1945.
65. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.
66. Valentine Oral History, 5-6
67. "Seventeen is Five," *Newsweek*, August 29, 1949, 47.
68. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999; Reynolds 1955; Scotford 1999; Valentine Oral History, March 9, 1982.
69. Valentine Oral History, 6.
70. Cooney 1982, 183; Ogden 1999, 284.
71. Cooney 1982, 184.
72. "Seventeen: A Unique Case Study." *Tide*, April 15, 1945.
73. A 1950 *Time* article entitled, "The Women," described Helen Valentine's relationship to the magazine, saying: "Since the birth of Triangle Publications' *Seventeen* five years ago, Helen Lachman Valentine, a lively, bright-eyed grandmother, has been its editor-in-chief. She liked to call it "my baby" and mothered not only the money-making teen-agers monthly(circ. 1,012,998) but the 50 girls and lone man [Edwin Miller] on its editorial staff. "The Women," *Time*, March 6, 1950, 56-7.
74. For example, "Two Years Before the Masthead," an article from

Seventeen's Second Birthday issue, explained to the reader that "*SEVENTEEN* was, and is, Helen Valentine's baby."

75. The magazine's promotional literature, directed at advertisers and retailers, often referred to *Seventeen* as "baby." For example, an advertisement that ran in industry publications on the one year anniversary of *Seventeen's* "birth" read: "Although the baby is only one year old, she certainly is big for her age!" (Referring to the average size of the issues) [Ellis Collection, Box 25, File 6]. This advertisement also reveals – if there was any question left – baby's gender: it's a girl!

76. Personal correspondence from Walter Annenberg to Helen Valentine, dated October 2, 1944. The author possesses a copy, the original is in the possession of Valentine Hertz Kass, Helen Valentine's granddaughter. This letter is covered in full later in this chapter. The story of Valentine selecting the name for *Seventeen* is also recounted in Cooney 1982, 183.

77. Cooney 1982, p. 183.

78. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.

79. Ogden 1999, 287.

80. Cooney 1982, 182.

81. Cooney 1982, 183; Ogden 1999, 285, 287. In an email communication on July 24, 2007 on this topic, former promotion director Estelle Ellis questions Annenberg's version, stating that any kind of decision about advertising "would have been Helen's."

82. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.

83. Ogden 1999, 287.

84. Ellis Personal Interview, June 19, 2003.

85. "*Seventeen: A Unique Case Study.*" *Tide*, April 15, 1945.

86. Reynolds 1955, 231

87. *Tide*, April 15, 1945.

88. Ellis Telephone Interview, July 6, 2004.

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89. Ellis Personal Interview, June 19, 2003.
90. Ellis Telephone Interview, July 6, 2004.
91. Reynolds 1955, 237.
92. "The Women," *Time*, March 6, 1950, 56-7.
93. Ellis Oral History, 10-11.
94. Personal correspondence from Walter Annenberg to Helen Valentine, dated October 19, 1946; copy of which is in the author's possession, original in the possession of Valentine Hertz Kass.
95. Barbara Valentine Hertz, telephone interview, February 27, 2006; Hertz vividly remembers her mother, Helen Valentine, describing these luncheon meetings, made memorable by Walter's predilection for using "clean" money to pay his tab: "Mom used to go down to Philadelphia periodically to have lunch with him. And the only thing I [small giggle] – I was still pretty damn young then – remember her telling when she came back from these meetings was that at the end of lunch the ... one of his valets or somebody like that, would come in with new or carefully laundered money because he would only handle *clean* money. Which you know his father died in jail and Walter was always trying to live down this reputation. And I remember that always so absolutely impressed mom – she was always both amused and impressed by it. We used to hear about the *new money* that was brought in after lunch."
96. Barbara Valentine Hertz, telephone interview, February 27, 2006; Estelle Ellis, personal interview, June 19, 2003; Alberta Eiseman, telephone interview, March 27, 2006; Ingrid Lowenstein Sladkus, telephone interview, April 29, 2006.
97. Other relatives who wrote for *Seventeen* at some point in the magazine's first five years included Helen Valentine's daughter and son-in-law, Barbara Valentine Hertz and David Bendel Hertz, as well as Alice Thompson's son, Ted Thompson.
98. Ogden 1999.
99. Estelle Ellis, personal email communication, June 22, 2006.
100. Estelle Ellis, personal email communication, June 23, 2006.
101. See Johnson and Prijatel 1999, 164-8, for more about the Editor-in-Chief position, generally.

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102. Ibid, 168; Authors refer to this position as a magazine's "sergeant."
103. Ibid, 168-9; for more about the positions of Managing Editor and Executive Editor, generally.
104. Estelle's upbringing, her chance meeting with Helen Valentine, and her work as *Seventeen's* Promotion Director are detailed at length in Chapter 4, "Teena Goes to Market."
105. Ellis Personal Interview, June 19, 2003.
106. *Seventeen*, November 1947, 40.
107. According to Social Security Death Index Records, Alice Dickey Thompson Beaton's birthday was October 31, 1905; however, Alice routinely gave her birthdate as October 31, 1910, representing herself as 5 years younger than she actually was (see, for example, *Who's Who of American Women*, First Edition, 1958-1959. Willamette, IL: Marquis Who's Who).
108. Barbara Valentine Hertz telephone interview, February 18, 2006.
109. See Beinhoff and Bekken 1995; Seeböhm 1982; "Kid Sister." *Time*, March 6, 1939, 36-7.
110. Advertising News and Notes. *New York Times*, May 15, 1944, 30.
111. "Backstage with *Seventeen*," September 1945, 24.
112. Judging by pictures, names, and other reports, some of the illustrators were women of color – Mary Suzuki, for instance– and several of the contributing artists were people of color. Estelle Ellis reports that a young Puerto Rican woman named Rosalind Santori briefly worked in the fashion department. (Ellis E-mail, July 11, 2006)
113. Eiseman telephone interview, March 27, 2006.
114. Sladkus telephone interview, April 20, 2006.
115. Sladkus telephone interview, April 20, 2006.
116. *Women's Wear Daily*, August 9, 1944, 17.
117. *Business Week*, August 26, 1944, 94-5.
118. "Bobby Sox Forum." *Newsweek*, November 30, 1944, 89-90.

119. The original of this letter is in the possession of Valentine Hertz Kass; a copy is in the possession of this author.

Chapter 3: *Seventeen* at War

1. According to Johnson and Prijatel 1999, 109, a magazine's tone is made up of four different facets: verbal style, overall appearance, business operations (this includes promotion), and attitude. Editorial philosophy entails "... what the magazine is intended to do, what areas of interest it covers, how it will approach those interests, and the voice it will use to express itself." See also: Mann 1989.

2. See Hall's 1980 article, "Encoding/Decoding," for more on this process.

3. See Mann 1989.

4. Gender scholars find this "tone of intimacy" to be a continuing, pervasive, and particularly gendered feature of women's and teen (girl) magazines, historically; far more common a discursive strategy in magazines produced for girls and women than for boys and men. Joy Leman (1980) and Cristanne Miller (1987) both consider it to be a part of a larger system of gender oppression. Leman, critiquing it from a Marxist Feminist position, argues that it is a way to distract the reader from existing political and economic inequalities (particularly in employment and consumption). Miller focuses on the power hierarchy that it seems to construct between producer and reader (as tutor and student) while magazines for men and boys address the reader more equitably, as a comrade or pal. See Willemsen 1998 and Kramarae 1981 for more on the differences between teen boy magazines and teen girl magazines.

5. *Seventeen*, September 1944, 33.

6. It is interesting to note that although she clearly is meant to be the visual depiction of the magazine, she looks nothing like the magazine's creator and editor, Helen Valentine. Instead, the model's relative youth and movie star beauty stand in stark contrast to the real 51-year-old Jewish grandmother at the helm of the magazine.

7. Berger 1972.

8. The author thanks Marissa Massoni for this observation.

9. Writing in his autobiography, Scavullo reminisces about his work at *Seventeen*: "I did everything during those *Seventeen* days –the makeup, the hair, I even helped with the fashions. I'd tell Eleanore Hillebrand to have Claire McCardell's dresses copied, and when I worked with Betty Gulesian and Ray Crespin at the magazine, we sparked up the teenage look away from those terrible Vicki Vaughn

dresses and those awful Toni permanents. I nearly lost *Seventeen* their Toni advertising account. I was doing so much straight hair in rebellion. When Toni finally threatened to pullout their advertising, I capitulated, and used a model called Anne Hemingway who had a mass of curly hair – and features like Katharine Hepburn.” Scavullo 1984, 4. [Vicki Vaughn, an early advertiser in *Seventeen*, manufactured affordable dresses with price tags that wouldn’t break an average family’s budget].

10. *Seventeen*, June 1945, 2.

11. See Cohen 2003. In her book, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, historian Cohen sets out four typologies of the 20th and 21st centuries in which the categories of “citizen” and “consumer” intermingle: “Citizen Consumer,” “Purchaser Consumer,” “Purchaser as Citizen,” and “Consumer/Citizen/Taxpayer/Voter.” Citizen Consumers, a type prevalent pre- and during World War II, were encouraged by the government to spend frugally and responsibly, saving money through the buying of war bonds, for the good of the country.

12. *Seventeen*, February 1945, 2.

13. Valentine Kass, quoted in Scotford 1999; The first black model did not appear in the pages of *Seventeen* until 1963 (See Palladino 1996). The first black model to appear on the cover of a mainstream women’s fashion magazine was Katiti Kironde II, who appeared on the cover of *Glamour* in August, 1968 (See Gross 1995, 238).

14. Scavullo tells an interesting story in his biography that seems to reflect his eagerness to integrate *Seventeen*’s pages: “I remember one trip to Africa I took with Rosemary [McMurtry, *Seventeen* Asst Fashion Editor] – she got a telegram and came to me white-faced: ‘My God, they’ve changed the issue to ‘See America First’! We’re supposed to make this look like America!’ All those beautiful blacks walking around in colorful turbans and I was supposed to make it look like the Grand Canyon or Oshkosh, Wisconsin? I was learning about the magazine business.” See Scavullo 1984, 3-4.

15. Ellis Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution, Series 1 Ellis Collection, Box 25, File 6.

16. See Table 1 in Appendix C. The percentage given for fiction represents the average across the entire 13 issues published during this time period. Because *Seventeen* didn’t included fiction until January 1945, however, this average slightly

underrepresents the ratio of space devoted to fiction after its inclusion. From January 1945 to September 1945, the magazine devoted an average of 11% of editorial space to fiction. In addition, I do not include a discussion of fiction in my analysis, as I am focusing on the magazine's non-fiction editorial ideology.

17. *Seventeen*, March 1945, 148.

18. *Seventeen*, April 1945, 58-59.

19. As a point of contemporary comparison, the table of contents of a recent issue of *Seventeen* lists articles under the following categories: "Fashion," "Beauty," "Health," "Love and Life Guide," "Real Life," "Stars," and "Fiction" (July, 2003). Articles that fall under the first three categories – Fashion, Beauty, and Health – constitute almost half (46%) of the editorial copy.

20. *Seventeen*, January 1945, 9.

21. *Seventeen*, July 1945, 45. During the war years, "bulky" suits and coats with menswear detailing were a fashion trend for women of all ages. Teen girls also wore denim jeans and untucked shirts. See Gordon and Gordon 1987, 228.

22. See Gordon and Gordon 1987, 245-46.

23. *Seventeen*, August 1945, 16.

24. *Seventeen*, September 1945, 66- 67.

25. *Seventeen*, September 1945, 81.

26. See McCracken 1995, 4. McCracken defines covert advertising as "the promotion of products, disguised as editorial material or hidden in some other form so that they appear to be non-advertising material."

27. See Zukin 2004, 41. According to Zukin 2004, fashion magazines (and other media arenas) offer everyone, regardless of economic status, the opportunity to "gain cultural capital by vicarious consumption."

28. See Cohen 2003 on the Citizen Consumer.

29. See "Idea for Teen-Agers," *New York Times*, April 21, 1945, 16 and "600 Teen-Age Girls See Sewing Exhibition," *New York Times*, April 22, 1945, 36.

30. *Seventeen*, March 1945, 76-77.

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31. *Seventeen*, April 1945, 100.
 32. *Seventeen*, August 1945, 96-97.
 33. *Seventeen*, September 1945, 80-1, 144-45.
 34. *Seventeen*, February 1945, 67.
 35. *Seventeen*, April 1945, 100.
 36. *Seventeen*, February 1945, 78-9, 128.
 37. *Seventeen*, November 1944, 44-5.
 38. *Seventeen*, September 1944, 66-7.
 39. *Seventeen*, December 1944, 88-9, 101.
 40. *Seventeen*, June 1945, 64-5, 161.
 41. *Seventeen*, July 1945, 22-3.
 42. *Seventeen*, September 1945, 63.
 43. See Brumberg 1998. See also Bartky 1988.
 44. *Seventeen*, September 1945, 63.
 45. *Seventeen*, January 1945, 54.
 46. This is another instance of what McCracken 1995 refers to as "covert advertising."
 47. *Seventeen*, September 1944, 4; October 1944, 4.
 48. *Seventeen*, December 1944, 112-13, 116.
 49. *Seventeen*, July 1945, 114.
 50. *Seventeen*, April 1945, 18.
 51. *Seventeen*, May 1945, 79.
 52. See Aronson 2002, 5. Amy Aronson asserts that these kinds of competing

discourses have long been a characteristic of women's magazines; using M. M. Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic, Aronson envisions competing discourses within a magazine as conversing, or talking back to one another.

53. *Seventeen*, May 1945, 162.

54. *Seventeen*, October 1944, 26, 28.

55. "Send Yourself To College," *Seventeen*, June 1945, 114-15; Eleanor Hiteshaw, "State College B.A.," *Seventeen*, June 1945, 86-89, 122, 123, 148-152.

56. Alice Beaton, "For Seniors Only," "With Chance for Advancement," *Seventeen*, January 1945, 81, 107.

57. *Seventeen*, May 1945, 90-1, 145, 148-9.

58. *Seventeen*, January 1945, 68-9, 103.

59. *Seventeen*, September 1945, 74-5, 122, 161.

60. *Seventeen*, December 1944, 80-1, 102.

61. *Seventeen*, September 1944, 60.

62. *Seventeen*, March 1945, 16-7, 146.

63. This was a characteristic of the "Citizen Consumer" ideology, as previously addressed (see Cohen, 2003).

64. *Seventeen*, August 1945, 24, 158.

65. Palladino, 1996.

66. *Seventeen*, December 1944, 70-1, 86-7.

67. *Seventeen*, March 1945, 26, 159.

68. *Seventeen*, May 1945, 34-5, 128.

69. *Seventeen*, May 1945, 35.

70. *Seventeen*, May 1945, 128.

71. "British Girls are Busy," *Seventeen*, September, 1944, 38-39; "Chinese Girls are Fighters," *Seventeen*, October, 1944, 44, 45, 74, 75; "This is Russia,"

Seventeen, November, 1944, 46, 47, 90, 91; "Girls of India," *Seventeen*, December, 1944, 68, 69, 115, 117; "Les Enfants de la Patrie," *Seventeen*, January, 1945, 58, 59, 97, 99, 118; "Our Good Neighbors," *Seventeen*, February, 1945, 84, 85, 114, 115, 122; "Girls of Canada," *Seventeen*, March, 1945, 82, 83, 145, 147, 155; "Turkish Girls, New Era," *Seventeen*, April, 1945, 72, 73; "He Mau Kaikamahine O Hawaii," *Seventeen*, May, 1945, 86, 87; "At the Konditeri," *Seventeen*, June, 1945, 96, 97.

72. *Seventeen*, May 1945, 87.

73. In a letter dated October 19, 1946, Annenberg decries Valentine's progressive agenda in the magazine, stating at one point: "I suspect you think it would be good for the world for negros to marry whites. I don't."

74. "Bravo! The Ballet," *Seventeen*, March, 1945, 127.

75. "Teens in the News," *Seventeen*, April, 1945, 168.

76. "Teens in the News," *Seventeen*, June, 1945, 168.

77. "Can All You Can," *Seventeen*, June, 1945, 101.

78. "Letters to the Editor," *Seventeen*, April, 1945, 7.

79. *Seventeen*, December 1944, 49.

80. *Seventeen*, September 1944, 54, 56, 84.

81. *Seventeen*, April 1945, 20; and August 1945, 35.

82. "Straw Vote," *Seventeen*, October 1944, 10-1.

83. "News Breaks into the News," *Seventeen*, July 1945, 56-7.

84. "Around the Cracker Barrel," *Seventeen*, July 1945, 66-7, 98-9.

85. "The Dumbarton Oaks Plan for World Organization," *Seventeen*, March 1945, 80-1, 139.

86. *Seventeen*, April 1945, 11-2.

87. *Seventeen*, May 1945, 94-5, 121, 136.

88. *Seventeen*, August 1945, 94-5, 124, 127, 150.

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89. *Seventeen*, September 1945, 88-9, 162, 164-65.
90. *Seventeen*, September 1945, 24.
91. *Magazine War Guide*. 1944-1945. Washington, D.C.: Office of War Information.
92. "The Unkindest Cut of All," *Seventeen*, August 1945, 61, 120, 162.
93. "Can All You Can," *Seventeen*, June 1945, 101, 142-44, 162.
94. "The Fight Against Inflation," *Seventeen*, August 1945, 94-5, 124, 127, 150.
95. "You-A Safety Engineer," *Seventeen*, July 1945, 28, 113.
96. "Christmas Weighs Five Pounds," *Seventeen*, October 1944, 22, 140.
97. "Join the Junior Red Cross," *Seventeen*, May 1945, 140.
98. "Serving the U.S. #1: Hospital Aides" *Seventeen*, July 1945, 81.
99. "Gone Are the Days," *Seventeen*, August 1945, 82-3, 148.
100. "The Dumbarton Oaks Plan," *Seventeen*, March 1945, 80-1, 139.
101. "Be a Volunteer Farmer," *Seventeen*, April 1945, 86-7, 117, 138, 146-47; and "From My Own Garden," *Seventeen*, May 1945, 64, 65, 122, 127.
102. *Seventeen*, April 1945, 14.
103. Dixon Gayer, "Xavier Cugat was a Brat," *Seventeen*, October 1944, 54-5, 85.
104. Dixon Gayer, "His Hi-di-highness," November 1944, 58-9, 92-3, 95.
105. Dixon Gayer, "3X Plus 2Y Equals Woody Herman," *Seventeen*, December 1944, 76-7, 103-4.
106. Dixon Gayer, "'Trumpet in the Sugar Bowl," *Seventeen*, January 1945, 78-9, 108.
107. Dixon Gayer, "One Night Stand," *Seventeen*, February 1945, 98-9, 142, 159.

108. Dixon Gayer, "Swing's Doctor of Philosophy," *Seventeen*, April 1945, 92-3, 158.

109. Dixon Gayer, "Happy with Prima," *Seventeen*, June 1945, 92-3, 124.

110. This continues today; See Massoni 2004.

111. "What a Way to Earn a Living!" *Seventeen*, May 1945, 68-9.

112. "Editors are Frequently People," *Seventeen*, September 1945, 68-9. *Seventeen* continues to represent work in the entertainment industry as fun and glamorous: See Massoni 2004.

113. "If He Could Only Cook," *Seventeen*, March 1945, 76.

114. "Advertising News and Notes," *New York Times*, August 23, 1945, 27.

115. Helen Valentine, "Happy Birthday," *Seventeen*, September 1945, 61.

116. Palladino 1996, xiv.

117. In letters dated October 16 and October 18, Annenberg and Valentine debated the merit of including pictures of "negros" in *Seventeen*, Valentine arguing for and Annenberg against. These letters are described in more detail in Chapter 7.

Chapter 4: Teena Goes to Market

1. A version of this chapter was published as an article; see "'Teena Goes to Market': *Seventeen* Magazine and the Early Construction of the Teen Girl (As) Consumer."

2. Estelle Ellis, Personal interview, June 19, 2003.

3. This is extensively covered in Chapter 3: *Seventeen* at War and Chapter 6: *Seventeen* at Peace.

4. Estelle Ellis, private correspondence, undated.

5. Unless otherwise indicated, the information in this section ("Meet Estelle") is drawn from Estelle Ellis's Oral History, taken on September 10, 1990, when she was 70-years-old.

6. Ellis Oral History.

7. See Isaacs 1999 (film & television); Friedan 1963 (women's magazines)

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8. Ellis Oral History, 1.
 9. Ellis Oral History, 12.
 10. Ellis Oral History, 5.
 11. According to Fredric Jameson (1979, 136), artistic genres existed pre-Capitalism as “signs of something like an aesthetic ‘contract’ between a cultural producer and a certain homogeneous class or group public,” but under Capitalism have come to represent a market relationship.
 12. Ellis Oral History, 6.
 13. Ellis Oral History, 6.
 14. Ellis Oral History, 6.
 15. Ellis Oral History, 7.
 16. Ellis Oral History, 7.
 17. Holstead Interview, [].
 18. Ellis Oral History, 13.
 19. Estelle Ellis Interview, June 19, 2003.
 20. Ellis Oral History, 19.
 21. Ellis Personal Interview, June 19, 2003.
 22. Ellis Oral History, 43.
 23. Ellis Oral History, 43.
 24. Ellis Oral History, 43.
 25. Ellis Telephone Interview, July 13, 2004.
 26. Ellis Personal Interview, June 19, 2003.
 27. Ogden 1999, 287; Again, as detailed in Footnote 81 of Chapter 3, Estelle Ellis disputes Annenberg’s memory of the amount of influence he exerted on *Seventeen’s* advertising policy.

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28. Ellis Personal Interview, June 19, 2003 .
 29. Ellis Personal Interview, June 19, 2003 .
 30. Ellis, Telephone Interview, July 13, 2004.
 31. Ellis Telephone Interview, July 13, 2004; Ellis Oral History, 42
 32. See Benson & Benson, Inc., 1945; Opinion Research Corp., 1947.
 33. Ellis Telephone Interview, July 13, 2004.
 34. Ellis Telephone Interview, July 13, 2004.
 35. Ellis Telephone Interview, July 13, 2004.
 36. Ellis Personal Collection, n.d.
 37. Ellis Collection, Box 18, Files 1-4.
 38. Ellis Collection, Box 18, Files 1-4.
 39. Opinion Research Corp, 1947, 8.
 40. Life with Teena, Volume II, 8.
 41. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5.
 42. c.f., Kellner 1995b; Smith 1987.
 43. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5
 44. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5.
 45. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5.
 46. Ellis Collection, Box 17, File 11.
 47. Ellis Collection, Box 17, File 11.
 48. Ellis Collection, Box 25, File 6.
 49. "Seventeen: A Unique Case Study," *Tide*, April 15, 1945. Ellis Collection, Box 18, File 5.

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50. Ellis Collection, Box 32, File 8.
 51. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5.
 52. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5.
 53. Ellis Collection, Box 26, File 1.
 54. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5.
 55. Ellis Collection, Box 25, File 6.
 56. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5.
 57. Ellis Collection, Box 25, File 6.
 58. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5
 59. "Teen-Age Market: It's 'Terrif,'" *Business Week*, June 8, 1946, 72.
 60. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5
 61. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5
 62. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5.
 63. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5.
 64. e.g., Kellner 1995b; McCracken 1993; Schor 1998.
 65. cf., McCracken 1993.
 66. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5.
 67. c.f., Joliffe and Catlett 1994.

Chapter 5: Teena Means Business

1. Ellis Collection, Box 38, File 5.
2. Kilbourne 1995; McCracken 1993; Stenmem 1995; Tuchman 1978.
3. Lux ads, *Seventeen*, October 1944 and November 1944.
4. Flame Glo ad, *Seventeen*, September 1944.

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5. Fox 1975.
 6. Sickles 2004.
 7. Featherknit ad, *Seventeen*, March 1945, 141.
 8. Cohen 2003, 70, 73.
 9. Cohen 2003.
 10. Jantzen ad, *Seventeen*, June 1945, 49.
 11. *Seventeen*, February 1945, 49.
 12. Dr. Pepper ad: *Seventeen*, June 1945, 109; Judy Kent ad: *Seventeen*, May 1945, 52.
 13. My thanks for Joey Sprague for making this point; scholars who have written about the representation of this type of masculinity in popular culture include: Cortese 1999 (see in particular, "Muscularity as Masculinity," 58-62); Connell 1987 (see in particular, "Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Femininity," 183-188); and Bordo 1999.
 14. See Connell 1987, 183-188, on hegemonic masculinity/emphasized femininity; See Mulvey 1975 on the male gaze.
 15. Joan Lord ad, *Seventeen*, May 1945, 2.
 16. Heart Throb Fashions ad, *Seventeen*, January 1945, 19.
 17. Keepsake Diamond Rings ad, *Seventeen*, April 1945, 104. The fact that *Seventeen* accepted ads for engagement rings seems to contradict Annenberg's later assertion in his biographies that he forbid all ads that encouraged early marriage.
 18. Companies using the "daintiness" discourse were: Jr First Fashions (teen), Jane Love Teen Frocks (teen), Teen-Set Dresses (teen), Diana Corset Company, Gossards Foundations (teen), Kleinert's Foundations (teen), Tampax, Kotex (teen), Rand Dress Shields (teen), Kleinert's Dress Shields, Lux Lingerie Soap, Lux Clothing Soap, Odorono Deodorant, Nonspi Deodorant (teen), DuraGloss Nail Polish, Prim New Spice Deodorant (teen), Mavis Talcum
 19. Nonspi ad, *Seventeen*, April 1945, 143.
 20. Lux ad, *Seventeen*, April 1945, 108.

21. Mavis Talcum ad, *Seventeen*, June 1945, 158.

22. For my linguistic analysis, I examined synonyms for the word “dainty” on Thesaurus.com. Dainty. Thesaurus.com. *Roget’s New Millennium Thesaurus, First Edition* (v 1.3.1), Lexico Publishing Group, LLC.
<http://thesaurus.reference.com/browse/dainty> (accessed: October 17, 2006)

23. Bartky 1988; Bordo 1999.

24. In *Seventeen’s* sixth year, only 2 companies used the word “dainty” in their advertisements.

25. While *Seventeen* didn’t formally organize advertisements in the same way it organized its editorial content, advertisements were *informally* organized in a spacial and chronological hierarchical order. Magazines, as a whole, generally structure their material (both editorial and advertising) using “wells,” which are blocks or sections of content. In *Seventeen’s* case, the magazine used a modified “monowell” structure, in which a large uninterrupted block of editorial material in the middle of the magazine was flanked on either side with wells made up of a mix of (mostly) advertising and (some) editorial content. The most important, influential advertisements appeared in the first section, usually as full-page ads. In addition, full-page ads could also be found on the inside of the magazine’s front cover and on either side of the back cover. Smaller, less expensive and less noticeable ads appeared in the third section of the magazine. This section usually included partial page ads (some very small) for clothing and accessories, girdles and bras, off-brand grooming supplies, feminine hygiene products, medicines, vocational training opportunities, and other miscellaneous products. See Johnson and Prijatel 1998 for more on different magazine structures.

26. Yardley ad, *Seventeen*, April 1945, 120.

27. Yardley ad, *Seventeen*, April 1945, 120.

28. Elizabeth Arden ad, *Seventeen*, September 1945, 3.

29. As evidenced in Chapter 4, “branding” teen girls while they were young and impressionable was a major tenet of *Seventeen’s* promotional campaign. One promotional document asked advertisers to:

Look Ahead With Teena

She’s a girl with a future!

You don’t have to be a crystal gazer to know that Teena the High School girl is within a few years of a job ... a husband ... a home of her own. Open-minded, impressionable, at an age when she’s interested in anything new,

Teena is a girl well worth knowing – surely worth cultivating. The lipstick that satisfies her now is the one you'll find in her purse when she's old enough to "remember when." The brand names she's made conscious of today are the ones she'll cling to – and trust – tomorrow. It's easier to sell Teena in her teens than to unsell her when she's 21-plus. Teena the girl with a future can be your future too, if you sell her in the magazine she and her teen-mates beg, borrow and buy – *Seventeen*. [Ellis Collection, Box 25, File 6]

30. Kotex ads, *Seventeen*, October 1944, 16 (body type); November 1944, 16 (junior hostess); March 1945, 110 (care for your hands and brows); May 1945, 32 (keep jewelry from tarnishing); June 1945, 32 (get exercise); July 1945, 23; (catch the attention of a boy); August 1945, 33 (play tennis); September 1945, 33 (end a date).

31. Tone ad, *Seventeen*, January 1945, 5.

32. Nonspi ad, *Seventeen*, December 1944, 98.

33. Nonspi ad, *Seventeen*, April 1945, 143.

34. Ex Lax ad, *Seventeen*, June 1945, 119.

35. Emphasis of "too strong" and "too mild" is mine and meant to accentuate the gender stereotypes of relating strength to men and passivity (mildness) to women.

36. Ex-Lax ad, *Seventeen*, September 1945, 143.

37. Ellis Personal Collection, n.d.

38. Swan ad, *Seventeen*, August 1945, 60.

39. Swan ad, *Seventeen*, September 1945, 60.

40. Revlon ad, *Seventeen*, June 1945, 104-5.

41. Revlon ad, *Seventeen*, September 1945, 108-9.

42. See Cook 2004 on the emergence of the teen clothing industry. Although Estelle Ellis's historical narrative of *Seventeen's* origins includes their "creation" of the teen clothing industry, the reality is that while *Seventeen* promoted and significantly contributed to the industry's growth, it already existed prior to the magazine's debut.

43. Interestingly, representation of western department stores seemed to stop short at Ogden, Utah (L. R. Samuel's); except for Saks' Beverly Hills outpost, no

regional department stores from the west coast, and in particular, California, advertised in the pages of the magazine during the first year.

44. Schrum 2004.
45. Jaunty Junior, Peggy Paige for Juniors, Juniorite, Jonathon Logan Junior Casuals.
46. Junior Firsts, Minx Modes Juniors, Doris Dodson Junior.
47. Unidentified brand from a Hecht Co. Department Store ad.
48. Topsey Originals.
49. Cook 2004; see also *Business Week*, 8 June 1946, p. 72.
50. Emily Wilkens ad, *Seventeen*, December 1944, 32.
51. J. P. Allen in Atlanta ad, *Seventeen*, December 1945, 27.
52. Carole King ad, *Seventeen*, June 1945, 46.
53. American Girl ad, *Seventeen*, May 1945, 124.
54. Flexnit ad, *Seventeen*, February 1945, 42.
55. Proverbs 22:6, King James Version.
56. Teen-Set Frocks, Landsburgh's Department Store ad, *Seventeen*, December 1944, 38.
57. Belt Modes ad, *Seventeen*, February 1945, 21.
58. Saybrooke ad, *Seventeen*, August 1945, 50.
59. Connies ad, *Seventeen*, April 1945, 121.
60. Yearounder's ad, *Seventeen*, January 1945, 16.
61. Joan Lord ad, *Seventeen*, December 1944, 25.
62. Jane Holly ad, *Seventeen*, February 1945, 56.
63. Thorton Hats ad, *Seventeen*, March 1945, 116.

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64. Gail Berk ad, *Seventeen*, September 1945, 18.
65. See, for example, *Women's Wear Daily*, February 21, 1945, 31.
66. "Grooming and Beauty Guidance Found Need of Teen-Age Girls, but It Must Be Practical." *New York Times*, November 22, 1944, 16.
67. "Perfume a Man Trap? How Quaint! It's a Utility, Say Beauty Editors." *New York Times*, February 18, 1949, 20.
68. "Why snub 8 million customers?" *Cosmetics and Toiletries*, August, 1949. Ellis Collection, Box 18, File 6.
69. Modess ad, *Seventeen*, August 1950, 238.
70. Tampax ad, *Seventeen*, May 1950, 114.
71. Brumberg 1998, 49. According to Joan Jacobs Brumberg, despite the increased discourse on menstruation in the 1940's, "girls still had to be extremely wary [...] about showing, smelling, offending. In effect, they had to get their bodies under control."
72. Kotex ad, *Seventeen*, September 1949, 171.
73. Kotex ad, *Seventeen*, July 1950, 31.
74. Kotex ad, *Seventeen*, September 1949, 171.
75. Kotex ad, *Seventeen*, September 1949, 171.
76. Kotex ad, *Seventeen*, December 1949, 51.
77. Kotex ad, *Seventeen*, January 1950, 86.
78. Kotex ad, *Seventeen*, July 1950, 31.
79. Bates ads, *Seventeen*, August 1945, 105.
80. Swan ad, *Seventeen*, February 1945, 100.
81. Lunt ad, *Seventeen*, April 1949, 60.
82. Towle ad, *Seventeen*, February 1950, 33; Reed & Barton ad, *Seventeen*, June 1950, 25; Gorham ad, *Seventeen*, September 1950, inside front cover.

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83. Gorham ad, *Seventeen*, December 1949, 9.
 84. Rogers Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, October 1949, 27.
 85. International Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, February 1950, 5.
 86. Towle ad, *Seventeen*, February 1950, 33.
 87. International Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, December 1949, 3.
 88. International Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, April 1950, 5.
 89. Gorham Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, April 1950, inside front cover.
 90. International Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, March 1950, 5.
 91. Lunt Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, September 1949, 58; also April 1950, 60.
 92. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, October 1949, 37.
 93. Gorham Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, December 1949, 9.
 94. International Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, April 1950, 5.
 95. Nobility Plate ad, *Seventeen*, November 1949, 27.
 96. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, February 1950, 33.
 97. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, November 1949, 33.
 98. Reed & Barton ad, *Seventeen*, November 1949, 21.
 99. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, September 1949, 25.
 100. International Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, December 1949, 3.
 101. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, September 1949, 25; also February 1950, 33; Lunt Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, September 1949, 58; International Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, December 1949, 3; also April 1950, 5.
 102. Fine Arts Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, January 1950, back cover.
 103. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, March 1950, 51; Gorham Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, April 1950, inside front cover.

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104. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, September 1950, 51.
 105. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, March 1950, 51.
 106. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, December 1949, 35.
 107. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, April 1950, 33.
 108. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, May 1950, 33.
 109. International Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, October 1949, 7.
 110. International Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, July 1950, 9.
 111. International Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, August 1950, 5.
 112. International Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, December 1949, 3.
 113. Towle Sterling ad, *Seventeen*, May 1950, 33.

Chapter 6: *Seventeen* at Peace

1. See Gordon and Gordon 1987; Kaledin 2000; Sickels 2004.
2. Faludi 1991; Honey 1984.
3. According to the Government's own 1944 survey, nearly 80% of women in war production plants wanted to retain their jobs after reconversion. U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *Women Workers in Ten War Production Areas and Their Postwar Employment Plans*, cited in Honey 1984, 224.
4. Ibid.
5. Peterson 1964, 39.
6. "P.S." *Business Week*, February 23, 1946, 90.
7. *Women's Wear Daily*, August 10, 1945, 13.
8. Snow's departure from *Vogue* ended her close friendships with publisher Nast and her former mentor Chase, both of whom considered her departure to rival Hearst publication *Harper's Bazaar* as an act tantamount to treason. See Seeborn 1982.
9. Peterson 1964, 220; see also "Teen-Age Magazine" *Life*, October 29,

1945, 77-80.

10. Richard Avedon, Francesco Scavullo's contemporary and fellow future iconic fashion figure, photographed many of its covers, while its art and design developed under the watchful eyes of Alexey Brodovitch and Lillian Bassman, industry peers of Cipe Pineles. After *Junior Bazaar's* demise, Bassman switched careers to photography, and her photos accompanied an October, 1949 *Seventeen* article entitled "Beauty Begins at Home." Her bio for "They Worked with Us this Month" applauds her new pursuit, stating that "She is fast becoming a specialist in 'feminine photography.' Most of her pictures are of lingerie, women dressing, undressing, combing their hair." (*Seventeen*, October 1949, 50)

11. See Peterson 1964, 220.

12. Ogden 1999, 288.

13. Keresey 1984. See also Peirce 1995b. *Calling All Girls* underwent many name changes targeted readership shifts throughout its publication history: *CAG* (1941-49); *Senior Prom* (1949-1951); *Polly Pigtales* (1953-1955); *CAG* (1955-1966); *Young Miss* (1966-1989); *YM/Young and Modern* (1989-2005 – final).

14. Personal correspondence between Helen Valentine and Walter Annenberg dated October 16, 1946 and October 18, 1946; copies in the author's possession, originals in the possession of Valentine Hertz Kass.

15. Ellis Collection, Box 17, File 12.

16. Ellis Collection, Box 17, File 13. For example, in the September 1946 supplement, home ec teachers, guidance instructors and home ec club advisors were directed to an article in the September issue of *Seventeen* entitled "Home Life is Their Business" which detailed the field of home economics as a career choice. The supplement then suggested lesson plans, activities, visual aides, key questions, field trips and a bibliography that link to the article and its topic. The same "Seventeen in the Classroom" issue offered similar help for "food and nutrition teachers" using the *Seventeen* articles on "King Peanut" (about "the importance of peanuts" as a farm product and inexpensive and healthful food choice, recipes and party plan included) and "Eat it up at Noon" (about preparing well-balanced lunches).

17. "It's Up to Youth" ad, *Seventeen*, November 1946, 298.

18. "They Worked with Us This Month," *Seventeen*, December 1949, 38.

19. Gordon and Gordon 1987.

20. Bartky 1988; Bordo 1993; Brumberg 1998; Wolf 1991.

21. Joan Jacobs Brumberg, writing in the *Body Project*, describes the 1920's as a similar time period in which the "bob" became a symbol of "modern" life, as well as a way to distinguish young women from old. It was also associated with a slimmer physique – one that required "new internal constraint, on of which was controlling food intake." See Brumberg 1998, 102.

22. The largest issue during the entire period was the August 1946 issue (with back-to-school fashions), at 311 pages.

23. "Thank You for Your Letters," *Seventeen*, September 1950, 4.

24. Valentine, "Seventeen Says Hello," *Seventeen*, September 1944, 33.

25. Ogden 1999, 288.

26. *Seventeen*, September 1949, 96.

27. *Seventeen*, August 1950, 122.

28. See Scotford 1999 for more on Pineles's influence at the magazine generally, and on the fashion pages specifically.

29. *Seventeen*, April 1950, 88.

30. "The Boys Speak Up," *Seventeen*, May 1950, 114.

31. Bartky 1998, 34. According to Bartky, "In contemporary patriarchal culture, a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of more women: they stand perpetually before his gaze and under his judgment."

32. "A Better Figure for You," *Seventeen*, September 1950, 50.

33. "Get into Shape," *Seventeen*, January 1950, 26.

34. See Bartky 1988; Bordo 1993; Brumberg 1998; Wolf 1991.

35. See Cohen 2003. The term "Purchaser Citizen" was coined by Cohen to describe the postwar model of consumption as the means to both personal and societal prosperity.

36. See Foner 1998.

37. "Those Little Touches," *Seventeen*, September 1949, 204.

38. Betty Gulesian, "Your First Piece of Real Jewelry," *Seventeen*, December 1949, 78.

39. For example, in the September 1950 feature, "DAY out ...NIGHT out," accessories are suggested as a way to *extend* the usefulness for certain pieces of a wardrobe: "The dresses above go all around the clock; come up looking fresh and, what's more, different for evening. We call them dual-life dresses because they can look casual by day, yet in the twinkling of a rhinestone, shed a jacket, retie a shawl, toss on a bib and go to dinner in high style." Cohen (2003) states that these impulses – to spend responsibly and to spend freely – co-existed (with tension) within society and individuals, especially during the WWII era, but the shift was toward the latter in the postwar period.

40. "Some Good Reasons to Sew Your Own," *Seventeen*, July 1950, 38.

41. Covert, 2002, 13. Covert found that advertisements in upper class women's magazines published during World War II (*Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*) frequently asserted that the maintenance of beauty was the primary way these women could support the war effort. Interestingly, *Seventeen* used this phrasing in an ad for its June 1950 "Young Beauty" issue, stating: "Beauty is your duty. "Do your very best to look your best. SEVENTEEN is ready to help, with the June "Young Beauty" issue, on the newstands June 2" (*Seventeen*, May 1950, 207).

42. "Scale That Figure Down," *Seventeen*, March 1950, 106.

43. *Ibid*, 107.

44. "Posture Perfect?" *Seventeen*, August 1950, 106.

45. "Figure on These," *Seventeen*, August 1950, 159.

46. Jean Campbell, "Pad That Frame," *Seventeen*, November 1949, 108.

47. "Proof ... without Pudding," *Seventeen*, November 1949, 108.

48. "Thank You for Your Letters," *Seventeen*, January 1950, 4.

49. "Thank You for Your Letters," *Seventeen*, January 1950, 4.

50. Jean Campbell, "Who's a Dummy?" *Seventeen*, January 1950, 50.

51. *Ibid*, 51.

52. "Make a Pretty Face," *Seventeen*, September 1949, 110.

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53. Jean Campbell, "Beauty Begins at Home," *Seventeen*, October 1949, 102.
54. Jean Campbell, "On Your Toes," *Seventeen*, February 1950, 102.
55. "Up to Snuff," *Seventeen*, August 1950, 44. [sample cite: "You're not an ice-cream pop or a flower or a bird, you're a *girl*. It behooves you, therefore, to face each day as fresh and dewy and pretty-smelling as a water lily. And to stay that way. People expect it of you, that's why. You've got a reputation to keep up. And besides, if you don't, you'll feel miserable."]
56. "What Makes a Pretty Girl," *Seventeen*, June 1950, 49.
57. "Your Face ... Its Care, Its Trimming," *Seventeen*, June 1950, 50.
58. "Your Hair," *Seventeen*, June 1950, 52.
59. "Your Fragrance," *Seventeen*, June 1950, 53.
60. "Your Hands," *Seventeen*, June 1950, 54.
61. "Your Feet," *Seventeen*, June 1950, 55.
62. "You Can't Be Almost Clean," *Seventeen*, June 1950, 56.
63. "These Make a Pretty Girl," *Seventeen*, June 1950, 86.
64. See Bartky 1998 for a Foucauldian analysis of the grooming process as discipline.
65. B. R. of Philadelphia, "Thank You For Your Letters," *Seventeen*, September 1950, 60.
66. "Thank You For Your Letters," *Seventeen*, September 1950, 60.
67. Although I use the word "feminist" to describe the magazine's early contents, this was not a word that *Seventeen's* originators embraced – either at that time or even retrospectively. They balked at the "feminist" moniker, preferring instead to describe themselves and their support of working women as "careerist." They were not alone in making this distinction; *Mademoiselle's* editor, writing in the February 1950 "career" issue, also felt led to differentiate, asserting that "We aren't feminists crusading for women's right to work or battle-axes encouraging competition with our men..."
68. Alice Thompson, "For Seniors Only," *Seventeen*, September 1944, 60.

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69. Margaret Mead, "Can Homemaking Really Be a Career?" *Seventeen*, November 1948, 116.
70. Eileen Murphy, "Wizardry in Four Walls," *Seventeen*, October 1949, 94.
71. Eileen Murphy, "Rising in Retailing," *Seventeen*, September 1949, 128.
72. Eileen Murphy, "Beauty is BIG BUSINESS," *Seventeen*, June 1950, 62.
73. Eileen Murphy, "On Minding Your KEYS and Cues," *Seventeen*, July 1950, 78.
74. Dickey Meyer, "You, Too, Can Work For Something," *Seventeen*, December 1949, 82.
75. Eileen Murphy, "Finance: Feminine Gender," *Seventeen*, April 1950, 92.
76. Eileen Murphy, "Labs and Lassies," *Seventeen*, February 1950, 90.
77. Ibid, 165.
78. Barbara Moench, "Who Does Your Laundry?" ("Why Don't Parents Grow Up? #57"), *Seventeen*, October 1949, 38.
79. Peter Leavy, "from a BOY'S point of view," *Seventeen*, April 1950, 81.
80. Peter Leavy, "Somebody Would Like to Meet You," ("From a Boy's Point of View"), *Seventeen*, June 1950, 16.
81. Peter Leavy, "Just the Way You Look Tonight," ("From a Boy's Point of View"), August 1950, 30.
82. Ibid, 90.
83. "Thank You for Your Letters," *Seventeen*, July 1950, 4.
84. "Editor's Note," ("From a Boy's Point of View"), *Seventeen*, August 1950, 91.
85. "Your Home and You," *Seventeen*, October 1949, 80 (picture), 81 (essay).
86. "To Market, To Market," *Seventeen*, October 1949, 56.
87. "At Home on the Range," *Seventeen*, September 1950, 92.

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88. "Herbs and Spice Make 'Most Everything Nice,'" *Seventeen*, August 1950, 92.
89. "Beginner at the Oven," *Seventeen*, May 1950, 68.
90. "Why Breakfast?," *Seventeen*, September 1950, 66.
91. "Bring It in a Basket," *Seventeen*, January 1950, 68.
92. "Practice on the Family," *Seventeen*, October 1949, 90.
93. "Family Favorites," *Seventeen*, November 1949, 100.
94. "Every Family Likes... Pancakes," *Seventeen*, November 1949, 116.
95. "Bake Him a Pie," *Seventeen*, April 1950, 112.
96. "A Box Social," *Seventeen*, August 1950, 178.
97. "Party Lifesavers," *Seventeen*, March 1950, 130.
98. "Simple But Super," *Seventeen*, April 1950, 64.
99. Beryl Walter, "Desserts on Ice," *Seventeen*, August 1950, 154.
100. Beryl Walter, "Rodeo Round-Up," *Seventeen*, September 1950, 168.
101. "Plan a Picnic," *Seventeen*, July, 1950, 92.
102. Beryl Walter, "Open a Can," *Seventeen*, July 1950, 46.
103. Mimi Sheraton, "Your Room Comes of Age," *Seventeen*, September 1949, 118.
104. "Plan from a Picture," *Seventeen*, January 1950, 76.
105. Mimi Sheraton, "Small Rooms and How They GROW," *Seventeen*, March, 1950, 122.
106. Mimi Sheraton, "Bird's-eye View of Two to a Room," *Seventeen*, August 1950, 180.
107. Mimi Sheraton, "Your OWN Living Room," *Seventeen*, October 1949, 108.

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108. "1 Chest, 5 Finishes," *Seventeen*, July 1950, 44; "Make Your Own Lamp," *Seventeen*, August 1950, 194.
109. Mimi Sheraton, "A Good Night's Rest," *Seventeen*, February 1950, 106.
110. Described and analyzed in Chapter 4, "Teena Goes to Market."
111. For example, one promotional advertisement urged businessmen to:
Bank on Teena
the high school girl –
to get her family to take a trip ...
To persuade her father they need a new car ...
To convince her mother they can't live without new living-room furniture...
[...] For our girl Teena has a way with her friends and her family. Persuasive
... persistent, she knows how to get what she wants. And you can make her
want the product you sell if you tell her about it in the magazine she reads and
believes –
Seventeen. [Box 38, File 5]
112. "Your Treasure Chest," *Seventeen*, August 1949, 50.
113. "Your Treasure Chest," *Seventeen*, July 1950, 28.
114. Hagyard replaced Betty Betz after she (and her verse-writer) Anne Clark left *Seventeen* to write and illustrate a string of teen "how to" books.
115. Betty Gulesian, "Shopping Takes More Than Money," *Seventeen*, March 1950, 167.
116. Detailed in Chapter 7: Divorce in the Family.

Chapter 7: Divorce in the Family

1. "The Editors Serenade You," *Seventeen*, September 1948, 108-109.
2. Personal correspondence from Helen Valentine to Walter Annenberg, dated October 16, 1946; copy in the author's possession, original in the possession of Valentine Hertz Kass (Helen Valentine's granddaughter).
3. Personal correspondence from Walter Annenberg to Helen Valentine, dated October 18, 1946; copy in the author's possession, original in the possession of Valentine Hertz Kass.

4. This version of the story is found in Ogden 1999. Estelle Ellis, however, remembers pressure from the business side of the magazine in this regard (personal email from Estelle Ellis dated July 12, 2006).

5. "Personnel," *The New York Times*, April 28, 1949, 47.

6. "50 Girls and One Man," *Time*, May 16, 1949, 56-7.

7. "Seventeen is Five." *Newsweek*, August 29, 1949, 47-48.

8. Ellis telephone interview, July 13, 2004

9. Estelle Ellis at times intimates that this could have been more than a business relationship between Walter and Alice, but she never confirms it, saying instead: "whether somebody screws somebody is not the point. Whether they do it sexually. If they *screw* them... professionally, it matters. (Ellis telephone interview, July 13, 2004)

10. Ellis telephone interview, July 13, 2004

11. A copy of this letter is in the author's possession; the original is in the possession of Valentine Hertz Kass.

12. The "lone man" was entertainment editor Edwin Miller.

13. Eiseman telephone interview, March 27, 2006.

14. In reality, Alice was 44-years-old at the time.

15. Serving as Thompson's replacements were: Irene Kittle Kamp, Alice's managing editor at *Glamour*, became her managing editor at *Seventeen*. Cipe Pineles' assistant, Joan Fenton, became art director. Rosemary McMurtry, formerly merchandise editor, became fashion editor. Interestingly, in light of earlier reports of Annenberg's desire to "get promotion, advertising and editorial departments working together to plug the magazine," the position of promotion director dropped from the masthead.

16. Sladkus telephone interview, April 20, 2006.

17. Eiseman telephone interview, March 27, 2006.

18. Sladkus telephone interview, April 20, 2006.

19. Sladkus telephone interview, April 20, 2006.

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20. Sladkus telephone interview, April 20, 2006.
 21. Ellis personal interview, June 19, 2003.
 22. Alice Thompson, "Girls is Funny People," *Seventeen*, April 1945, 118.
 23. Reskin and Padavic 1994, 49-50.
 24. Fox 1975; Honey 1984; Walker 2000.
 25. Faludi 1991; Honey 1984.
 26. On the September 28, 2006 edition of the *Today Show*, psychologist Gail Saltz asserted that June Cleaver continues to be a fantasy feminine ideal for some contemporary men. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15039140/> Accessed on July 23, 2007. In addition, see Coontz 1992, Chapter 2, "'Leave It to 'Beaver' and 'Ozzie and Harriet'" for more on 1950 sitcom homemakers.
 27. Faludi 1991; Friedan 1963.
 28. Wolf 1991, 14.
 29. Friedan 1963; My use of the word "internalized" is conscious and considered. Although Friedan has been rather roundly criticized for describing the "feminine mystique" in terms of affluent middle class women (women who could afford to follow its mandates, however unhappily), I would argue that as a pervasive cultural model, working women were subject to internalizing the feminine mystique as an ideal, potentially creating considerable cognitive dissonance. This seems to continue even today in the "mommy war" debate.
 30. Bagdikian 2000; Croteau and Hoynes 2000, 2001; Gamson, et al. 1992; Gerbner 1998; hooks 1996; Kellner 1995a; Kilbourne 1995, 1999; McCracken 1993; Steeves 1993; Tuchman 1978.
 31. Bagdikian 2000; Croteau and Hoynes 2000, 2001; Gamson, et al. 1992; Gerbner 1998; hooks 1996; Horkheimer and Adorno 1944; Kellner 1995a; Kilbourne 1999, 34; McCracken 1993; Steeves 1993; Tuchman 1978.
 32. Bagdikian 2000; Croteau and Hoynes 2000; Gamson, et al. 1992; Steinem 1995.
 33. Jhally 1995; Kilbourne 1999; Schor 1998.
 34. White 1970.

35. I do not include a discussion and analysis of readers' letters because there is no way for me to know how the letters that appeared in the magazine were selected, whether as a "sample" they represented the entirety of letters received, or whether they actually influenced editorial decisions. According to magazine historian Mary Ellen Zuckerman, "Readers historically have shaped content through their letters, market research studies and "purchasing behavior" Zuckerman 1998, xiv.

36. Life with Teena I. Conducted by Benson & Benson, Inc. in March, 1945. Published by Triangle Publications, 1945; and Life with Teena, Vol II, Conducted by Opinion Research Corporation in June-August, 1946. Published by Triangle Publications, 1947.

37. See Life with Teena I. Conducted by Benson & Benson, Inc. in March, 1945. Published by Triangle Publications, 1945. Page 82; and Life with Teena, Vol II, Conducted by Opinion Research Corporation in June-August, 1946. Published by Triangle Publications, 1947. Pages 91, 100, 102. The first survey, "Life with Teena I," gathered data from a sample of *Seventeen's* readers in March 1945 and included the inquiry "What do you enjoy most about SEVENTEEN?" In answer, a majority of readers reported favoring the fashion articles (65%), followed by advice articles on appearance and beauty (11%). In comparison, only a tiny minority of the readership reported a preference for articles on "ideas in general" (3%).

38. Life with Teena, Vol II, Conducted by Opinion Research Corporation in June-August, 1946. Published by Triangle Publications, 1947. Pages 91, 100, 102.

39. Life with Teena I asked: "Do you think that you would like to work after you are married?" – to which 66% of the respondents answered with a resounding "No" (15% answered "Yes," 19%, "Do not know"). Life with Teena II asked: "After you get married do you think you'll want to work or will you want to keep house?" a great majority (69%) reported wanting to keep house; only 13% wanted to work, 14% wanted to do "both."

40. e.g., Chodorow 1998 [1978]; Connell 1987; Mies 1998 [1968]; Rubin 1975; Smith 1987.

41. Wolf 1991; also Bartky 1988 and Bordo 1993.

42. Friedan 1963; Coontz 1992, 9; see also Chodorow 1998 [1978].

43. This letter is discussed in detail in Chapter 2: "The Birth of the Teen Magazine. I possess a copy of the letter, the original of which is in the possession of Helen Valentine's granddaughter, Valentine Kass.

44. Marx [], 285.

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45. Ellis Interview, New York City, June 19, 2003.
 46. Hartmann 1979/1981; see also Acker 1990, 1999.
 47. Ogden 1999, 288.
 48. Raver, Anne. "And Mrs. Haupt, Seeing the Garden, Pronounced It Good." *New York Times*, April 12, 1992, 71.
 49. Murdoch sold *Seventeen* to K-111 Magazines in 1991, which became PRIMEDIA; in 2003, PRIMEDIA sold *Seventeen* to Hearst Magazines, its current owner.
 50. Associated Press. "Billionaire publisher and philanthropist Walter Annenberg dies at 94." October 1, 2002.
 51. Cornwell, Rupert. "Obituary: Walter Annenberg." *The Independent*. October 2, 2002.
 52. Glueck, Grace. "Walter Annenberg, 94, Dies; Philanthropist and Publisher." *New York Times*, October 2, 2002.
 53. Nietzsche 1968; also Foucault 1980.
 54. Ellis Interview, New York City, June 19, 2003.
 55. Cooney 1982; Ogden 1999.
 56. "Inside Fashion." *Women's Wear Daily*, Sept 18, 1967.
 57. Personal correspondence from Nancy White to Helen Valentine, dated September 22, 1967.
 58. "Moe's Boy Walter at the Court of St. James." *Fortune*, v. 81, 88-93.
 59. Personal correspondence from William Rosen to Louis Banks, dated June 19, 1970. A copy of this letter is in the possession of the author; the original copy is in the possession of Valentine Kass.
 60. Hall 1981, 227-240.
 61. Carmody, Dierdre. "Reaching Teenagers, Without Using a Phone." *New York Times*, January 18, 1993, p. D6.
 62. Valentine Oral History, 7

63. Leman 1980, 77.

Appendix – Research Method

1. Hill Collins conceptualizes the Matrix of Domination as the hierarchical structure on which locations between privilege and oppression are based on the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, nationality, religion, etc. See Hill Collins 2000, 227-28.

2. My analysis of *Seventeen's* advertising is found in Chapter 5: Teena Means Business.

3. Charmaz 2004.

4. Marzolf 1978.

5. Goffman 1979; Barthes 1973 [1957].

6. See Smith 2006; Also Hall 1980.

7. Portelli 1981, 99.

8. Portelli 1981, 99; see also Kennedy 1997.

9. Portelli 1981, 99-100.

10. c.f., Stuart 1994.

11. Portelli 1981.

12. Shulamit Reinharz in *On Becoming a Social Scientist*, cited in Yow 1997, 62.

13. Yow 1997, 59, 63, 64, 66.

14. Ferree and Hess 1987, 13.

15. Marzolf 1978.

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